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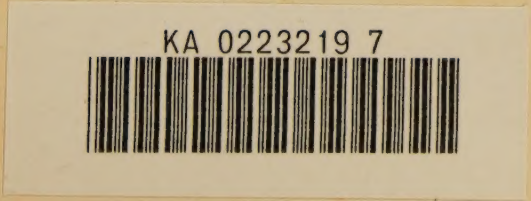

LETTERS OF

HORACE WALPOLE

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
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Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford

from a drawing by George Dance.

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

AND EDITED WITH NOTES AND INDICES

BY

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

VOL. XI: 1779—1781

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† Now printed for the first time.

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† Now printed for the first time.

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2045	April 25, 1780	Rev. William Mason	1914
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2047	[May 1780]	Rev. William Mason	1915
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2050	May 24, 1780	Rev. William Mason	1919
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2104	Oct. 7, 1780	Sir Horace Mann	1967
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2111	Nov. 1, 1780.	Rev. William Mason.	1972
2112	Nov. 2, 1780.	Sir Horace Mann	1973
2113	Nov. 11, 1780	Rev. William Cole	1974
2114	Nov. 16, 1780	Countess of Upper Ossory	1975
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2116	Nov. 24, 1780	Rev. William Cole	1977

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2123	Dec. 12, 1780	Sir Horace Mann	1983
2124	Dec. 17, 1780	Countess of Upper Ossory	1984
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2126	Dec. 21, 1780	Sir Horace Mann	1986
2127	Christmas Day, 1780.	Countess of Upper Ossory	1987
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1781.

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2138	Jan. 18, 1781	Sir Horace Mann	1997
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2140	Jan. 27, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2000
2141	Jan. 31, 1781	Countess of Upper Ossory	2001
2142	Feb. 3, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2002
2143	Feb. 5, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2003
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2145	Feb. 7, 1781	Rev. William Cole	2005
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2149	Feb. 10, 1781	Lord Hailes	2009
2150	Feb. 11, 1781	Sir Horace Mann	2010
2151	Feb. 19, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2011
2152	Feb. 26, 1781	Sir Horace Mann	2012
2153	March 2, 1781	Rev. William Cole	2013
2154	March 3, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2014
2155	March 5, 1781	Rev. William Cole	2015
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2161	March 30, 1781	Sir Horace Mann	2019
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2180	May 22, 1781	Rev. William Mason	2035

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

1961. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 20, 1779.

It would have been impossible for me, Madam, to have met your Ladyship in town yesterday, had it been proper: but when you were there but for one day, and that a nuptial one, I should have been unreasonable to expect you to bestow a twinkling on me. In fact, I was detained here; poor Lady Aylesbury was come to me all terror and distress.

Her daughter was really taken prisoner, and she had been told her husband and his island were captive too. The Duchess of Leinster, Lady William Campbell, and Mrs. Damer were actually taken by a privateer, the captain of which was no doubt a Paladin in disguise; he not only treated them with the continence of Scipio, but with disinterest, a virtue still more rare in a freebooter. He would not touch a pin; and they were told they were mistresses to go whither they pleased. Mr. Conway has been as little molested. *Acharnement* is left only to us. A courtier said yesterday, 'We must act offensively'; I replied, 'I thought we had done that sufficiently already, for we had offended all the world.' There were letters in the City on Saturday that say Gibraltar is besieged[1]. I have heard no more of it since; but it is very probable.

Letter 1961.—[1] The blockade of Gibraltar by the French and Spaniards began on June 21, 1779, and continued until 1783.

It is true that my niece Horatia has put on mourning for the Duke of Ancaster: it is on precedents, and with the approbation of the Duchess-Dowager, who has written to her in the kindest manner, acknowledging the intended marriage; lamenting not having her for a daughter, and offering to come to her as soon as she is able. Lady E. Burrell has written in the same style; and the new Duke and Duchess have sent compliments of condolence. Lady Horatia has behaved in the most reasonable manner, shown very proper concern, but nothing romantic or extravagant.

Your Ladyship exacts a *petit mot* on Canopus, but I have not a word to say. I have lived till all the maxims and axioms that I learnt in my youth are grown as superannuated as I am. The sages I was taught to worship have been exploded, and the experience of past ages contradicted. Ministers become more popular in proportion to their miscarriages; debts, taxes, losses, strengthen Government. Saws and proverbs, formerly esteemed the quintessence of wisdom, are inverted; for instance, rats of old abandoned a sinking ship—now they run into it. As we have chopped our old system to pieces and thrown it into the kettle to give it new life, be sure it will come out with fresh vigour and bloom; however, obstinate I *wait for the echo.* Let us see what is left, when we come to sue for, and do obtain peace. A map then, and a pen and ink, will decide who have been in the right.

I hope, and do not doubt, Madam, but your new Countess will be very happy. Lord Shelburne made an admirable husband to a wife much less handsome, and apparently, for I did not know her, less agreeable[2]. He I am sure will be out of luck if he is unfortunate, for I must do the Duchess of Bedford the justice to say, that a Spartan dame never launched more excellent wives than she has done.

[2] His first wife was a daughter of John Carteret, Earl Granville.

This was only meant as an answer, and I will not swell it into more. I see one is to be kept upon the *qui vive* all the summer with reports and alarms true or false; but I have prepared myself by disbelieving every one till it has been contradicted backwards and forwards two or three times.

We have not arrived at a word of truth these four years, till by a new lie becoming necessary its predecessor is forgotten and suffered to appear stark naked.

1962. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1779.

You will be tired of seeing my hand, Madam, yet it would be indecent neither to accept your kind invitation nor tell you why I do not. Yesterday I received notice from my attorney that the Master of the Rolls[1] has, with epigrammatic dispatch, heard my cause, and pronounced a decree in my favour. Surely the whip of the new driver, Lord Thurlow, has pervaded all the broad wheels of the law, and set them galloping. I must go to town on Monday, and get my money ready for payment—not from impatience to enter on my premises, but though the French declare they are coming to burn London, bank-bills are still more combustible than houses, and should my banker's shop be reduced to ashes, I might have a mansion to pay for, and nothing to pay with. If both were consumed, at least I should not be in debt.

I will own fairly, too, that the moment is so huge, I do not care to stir. It is pretty certain that France, vociferous as her threats, and ready as her preparations, will await the decision of the empire of the sea. We have, I doubt, one prong less to our trident than she and Spain; yet

Letter 1962.—[1] Sir Thomas Sewell.

I think the grapple will be tough. Were I Neptune or Æolus, or—I forget who was the classic god of sea-fights, or whether they ever deified any Twitcher after his reception into Olympus,—I should perhaps make a pretty impartial division of the damage, and lay it so heavy on both sides, that Madam the House of Bourbon should be glad to leave off playing with fire, and Madam Great Britain should learn to treat mediators with more civility. Every man John of the latter lady's boys are confident of success, and when other arguments fail, cry, 'Providence has always saved us'; which argument, I suppose, is built on this simple hypothesis, that God made Great Britain, and the devil all the rest of the world. To be sure I heartily pray for victory; but I would not have it quite so sound as to turn our heads and encourage us to pawn our last fig-leaf. Obstinacy has brought us to the precipice; and after squandering America, we stake ourselves rather than own we have lost it; but I forget,—what is all this to my going next week or not to Ampthill? Why, this all, our all, is the reason I do not go. Public, private considerations fetter me. I am no hero, nor any of the fine things your Ladyship says of me, and yet I must stay and comfort those that are weaker than myself. Lady Aylesbury is impressed with a thousand terrors, and not without cause. I tremble myself lest Mr. Conway should have an opportunity of being romantic and defending a pebble, because he has nothing else to defend; but *dabit Deus his quoque finem.* I have lived to see the rebels at Derby; and I am mighty apt to think that everything will end as I wish. I know no reason why I should be favoured with Fortune's smiles; but she takes fancies; and in gratitude and deference I have thrown myself entirely upon her. But two days ago she delivered me from a deluge. There was a torrent of rain; all the pipes were stopped, and the inundation

burst into six places of my house. The gallery was overflowed, pictures and damask soaked, the star-chamber drowned, and the staircase was a cataract. I sent up all the servants, and in a quarter of an hour the waters ceased, and I dreamt that a rainbow rested on the battlements, and assured my castle should never be drowned again. Pray, Madam, learn my visions; they are very comfortable, and founded on gratitude, not presumption.

I have heard much of Mr. B.'s being a second Cosmo Gordon and a third Parson Bate. It is a worthy occupation for a man and a gentleman! but too contemptible to dwell on.

A card shall be left for Mr. Berresford, in Grosvenor Place, on Monday. My gout entered like love, but I assure you did not retreat like love, or at sixty-two I doubt the fit would have been longer.

1963. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1779.

I employ a secretary, to spare one of my eyes, which is tormented with an inflammation. As it comes by fits, I impute it to my old enemy the gout; who, of all distempers, is the greatest harlequin. This charge is not made to avoid an unwillingness of owning that the breach may have been made by the general foe, old age; though its ally, the gout, may take advantage of the weak place.

I sent you a long letter by your nephew: it leaves me nothing to add but events, and of them there have been none, except the safe arrival of our great West Indian fleet, worth between two and three millions. I don't know why the fleets of Bourbon suffered it to pass quietly, unless to return the compliment of our not meddling with their

Domingo fleet. We heard last week that Gibraltar was invested: not more is confirmed than that great preparations are making in Spain for the siege. We, or at least I, do not know what numbers of the latter's ships have joined the French: they certainly outnumber Sir Charles Hardy's squadron; yet so noble a navy as his we never set forth, and it will cost them destruction to master it. They threaten us mightily from Havre and St. Maloes; but we are prepared, and I think they will prefer cheaper laurels elsewhere.

This is but a negative description, and merely in compliance with your desire of frequent letters. Private news we have none, but what I have long been bidden to expect, the completion of the sale of the pictures at Houghton to the Czarina. The sum stipulated is forty or forty-five thousand pounds, I neither know nor care which; nor whether the picture-merchant ever receives the whole sum, which probably he will not do, as I hear it is to be discharged at three payments—a miserable bargain for a mighty empress! Fresh lovers, and fresh, will perhaps intercept the second and third payments. Well! adieu to Houghton! about its mad master I shall never trouble myself more. From the moment he came into possession, he has undermined every act of my father that was within his reach, but, having none of that great man's sense or virtues, he could only lay wild hands on lands and houses; and, since he has stript Houghton of its glory, I do not care a straw what he does with the stone or the acres. The happiness my father entailed on this country has been thrown away in as distracted a manner, but his fame will not be injured by the insanity of any of his successors. We have paid a fine for having cut off the entail, but shall not so easily suffer a recovery.

General Conway is still in his little island, which I trust

is too diminutive to be descried by an Armada. I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nut-shell.

5th.

You perceive my eye is better, but I must not use it much. Yesterday came an account of the conquest of St. Vincent by the French. The poor Caribs assisted them, and are revenged on us: I cannot blame them. How impolitic is injustice, when man cannot command fortune! I still cannot help conjecturing that France will prefer demolishing all our outworks to attempting invasion here, where we are so mightily prepared. We fear they will not engage Sir Charles Hardy, though superior in number; as he has at least thirty-eight such ships, and such able and tried captains in them, as they cannot match. By thus detaining all our force at home, distant quarters are half at their mercy. They themselves think America much disposed to return to us, and therefore will probably not hazard a defeat here, which would leave us time to treat with the colonies. But I must not let my eye talk politics. Good night!

1964. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Aug. 7, 1779.

I have had a double excuse for not having written to your Ladyship for above a week; a return of the gout in my eye, and the completion of the purchase of my house, for which I have been no fewer than three times in town since last Sunday. Fortune has again smiled on me: I think myself most lucky to have paid my money; the house might be burnt, I obliged to buy it, and have nothing to pay for it—at least I shall not be in debt for the ashes. Well! Fortune has smiled on more than an individual, by conducting home our West Indian fleet. Huffed, rebuffed,

and driven off as she has been, she is likely to be our best ally. The rest, as ill-treated, are not so forgiving. Whether the French will come, is another matter: they certainly meditate it, and great destruction; they give out, to burn London. Lord North said publicly, at a large dinner at Lord Hertford's on Tuesday last, that he expected them in a week. Not having the Duchess of Bedford's shrewdness, I cannot discover cleverness in such a notification, unless he had bragged, too, that he had invited them. Still my mind does not *misgive* me, which is a comfortable resource, when one has not much grounds in reason. I take what precautions I can in my own affairs, and then resign myself to good fortune.

Your Ladyship will see Lord Grantham[1], and probably Lord Macartney[2]. Our friends are returned on our hands from all quarters: would to God I were as sure of seeing Mr. Conway in safety! I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nut-shell. This I dare say to you, Madam, though not to him. Do not wonder, then, that forty or twenty miles nearer to news are important to me. If Sir Charles Hardy's navy does not beat one a third more numerous, and with little loss too, Jersey will be swallowed on the road to England. All that will remain to the few will be to cry, 'You cannot say we did it,' though they do say so. This may sound small consolation; but weigh it against what we should feel if we had an empire lost, and all the lives and all the disgraces on our consciences, and then, Madam, is inculpability no *douceur*? Well! we must shut our eyes on all this at present, and defend our last stake, and not scold like the perverse Jews when the Temple totters. I could be amazed at many things, if

LETTER 1964. — [1] Ambassador at Madrid; he had returned to England in consequence of the outbreak of war with Spain.

[2] He had been taken prisoner by the French at Grenada, of which (with the other Caribbean islands) he had been Governor since 1775.

I had leisure—as why, after stooping to beg pardon of the Congress, we rejected the mediation of Spain; why, after beseeching France not to dabble in America, we do not treat now, and save what we can, as any peace signed to-day would be preferable to what we shall possibly sign two months hence. But we have stridden from blunder to blunder, and, as at chess, when the game is deplorable, the king and the castle change places; the one is reduced to a corner, and the other, who is called rook, too, may not bring him back without being checkmated.

1965. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1779.

I know how to wish you joy on the conclusion of a suit in Chancery, for I have just carried one there, and may say with truth what never could be applied before to law, *Veni, vidi, vici.* My cause was commenced, heard, and decided in two months. My palace in Berkeley Square is adjudged to me with costs, and the title bettered by that ordeal; and so I am rejoicing, as the ministers on the arrival yesterday of the Jamaica fleet, when neither I nor they know whether in two months any property may be worth sixpence. Nobody at your distance can conceive how much is at stake from total and general incapacity. Two dotards[1] are at the head of the only fleet and only army that are to decide our fate; and Lord North, with that *bonhomie* for which a child is whipped when it shouts on setting its own frock on fire, cries, he expected the French every day. I remember a story of General Nieberg[2], governor of the last emperor, and who lost the

Letter 1965.—[1] Sir Charles Hardy and Lord Amherst.

[2] Wilhelm Reinhard (1684–1774), Count von Neipperg, defeated in 1741 at the battle of Mollwitz.

first battle against the King of Prussia. He wrote to the Queen of Hungary these words: 'Je suis fâché de dire à sa Majesté que son armée est battue, et tout par la faute de son serviteur Nieberg.' The Queen, who had not contributed, repaired the misfortune.

In one word, I assure you I hope, though I do not believe, that the invasion will be in Ireland—not England. I wish this because it would be vain to wish that Scotland were south of both. I have no ill will to poor Ireland, but Ucalegon is at least one door farther off than one's own. I saw a letter but two days ago from Dublin, which says there is not a shilling to pay the small army there. They are hiding their plate and flocking to the capital, where there is no army to protect them. London will be in the same case; is to be left to old vain Northumberland and his constables, when the Emperor of America takes the field with all his guards. Lord Amherst in the meantime has begun works at Chatham, that cannot be finished in ten years, and then will be commanded by all the hills around. I could tell you forty parallel anecdotes, which if they do not terminate in total destruction, will never be believed, though every step of the last five years have marched towards them. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, fold their arms and cry, 'We have insulted them all so much, that they must sit still till we are humbled.' *That will happen*: we shall take a panic at once, and sign anything; or on the first unexpected and indecisive success flounder on in obstinacy. This reduces one barely to wish for favourable events, with the reversion of chance; for one knows not what to wish coolly. Fortune can scarce dovetail good and bad circumstances so as to repair and strengthen the country and constitution; which if not restored together, the former will at best but languish and never revive. But it is in vain to skim one's thoughts: they boil over,

and it is as well to finish now as write on. I will talk as if I did not see further than, I was going to say, most of those who have conducted us to the precipice, but some of them, believe me, are soundly alarmed. They do see at last that a bribe in hand was not worth two estates in the bush.

Well! *parlons comme si de rien n'étoit.* I was lately at Beddington, and saw there a print I never met with before. It is a mezzotint of a Sir Nicholas Carew, who lived temp. Geo. I, and never did anything but sit for that print; yet you know how inestimable an unique print—which however is not unique—is to a collector. There are at least five more in the house, and perhaps the plate, or I should not be so audacious as to beg one. In short, I should be greatly obliged to Mr. Fountaine[3] if he would give me one. An attorney lives in the mansion, who might be ordered to deliver one to Mr. Thomas Walpole, who lives at Carshalton, not two miles from Beddington. They are all framed and glazed. I do not want their accompaniments nor the print much, if pasted on cloth, though I would deign to accept one so, if no other is to be obtained.

Adieu! I have survived many dark moments, and think I do not know by what luck that you and I shall still meet again and pass some agreeable hours. When one reasons, one has few hopes; but a superstitious confidence always carries me to incline to expect that things will end to please me; and as I have found that my star knows much better than I do what is best for me, I commend myself to it, and beg it will mend the scene, as it did after the conquest of New York.

[3] John Fountayne, D.D. (1715–1802), Dean of York, connected with the Carews of Beddington through his mother and sister-in-law.

1966. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 12, 1779.

I write from decency, dear Sir, not from having anything particular to say, but to thank you for your offer of letting me see the arms of painted glass, which, however, I will decline, lest it should be broken; and as at present I have no occasion to employ the painter. If I build my offices, perhaps I may have; but I have dropped that thought for this year. The disastrous times do not inspire expense. Our alarms, I conclude, do not ruffle your hermitage. We are returning to our state of islandhood, and shall have little, I believe, to boast but of what we have been!

I see a *History of Alien Priories*[1] announced; do you know anything of it, or of the author?

I am, ever yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

1967. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday night late, Aug. 18, 1779.

All is true that you will see in the papers of the *Marlborough*, *Isis*, and *Southampton* being chased by the French and Spanish fleets of sixty or sixty-three sail, as the former were going to join Sir Charles Hardy. To-day came another express, that the united squadron was off Falmouth on Saturday. They are probably come to seek and fight our fleet, which, if not joined by those three ships, consists of but thirty-six—on whom depends our fate!

I could give you details of unreadiness at home that would shock you: miracles alone can counteract it, and them have we merited? If Hardy does not vanquish to deletion of the enemy, shall we be bettered? If he does, will fool-

Letter 1966.—[1] Edited by Nichols, assisted by Gough and Ducarel.

hardiness be corrected by success? Turn whither you will, whence is salvation to come to a nation so besotted? I will give you a sample of what the victors would reserve for those they deem their worst enemies, the friends of their country. The Bishop of Oxford[1], once a writer in patriot opposition, wrote t'other day to his friend and patron, my brother, that Lord Harcourt had invited him to dinner, treated him most benignantly, and not mentioned a word of politics; 'surely,' added the meek apostle, 'if there were a toleration of Patriots, Lord Harcourt would be entitled to the benefit of it'—that is, St. Dominic would not cut his host's throat, if the Holy Office ever pardoned, but it does not; and Lord Harcourt must die, though he has banqueted a bishop.

It is such wretches and their blundering politics that, in nineteen years, have changed a glorious empire into a wide heap of ruins. Amidst these calamities and public woes, I am trembling for Mr. Conway, who is chained to a rock[2]. I am anxious about the Duke of Richmond, who is exiled to Exeter, and may be exposed to the first descent with a handful of men, but

God and good angels fight on Richmond's side.

His virtues shine the brighter from the cloud of filth that is thrown on them, and a nation cannot be destroyed without its being remembered who would have saved it. History may flatter cotemporaries, but as the dead have no places, no pensions to bestow, truth revives the moment its enemies are in the grave, and then the bones of the *ultimi Anglorum* will be selected and enshrined by poor weeping posterity. You see I am seeking consolation among the reliques of my few friends; cold comfort, a vision of honorary tribute to be paid to the ashes of heroes in a little northern island,

LETTER 1967.—[1] Dr. John Butler. [2] He was still in Jersey.

that has no pride to live on but the memory of virtuous Patriots! These of happier days will be remembered too! and my father's favourite sentence of *quieta non movere* will appear to have been replete with as much wisdom as Lord Mansfield's schoolboy quotation of the Rubicon being passed. Adieu!

1968. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1779.

I hope I have not deceived you in telling you a fortnight ago that your nephew was set out. I thought so, but have heard since that he deferred his journey for a cricket-match —and I do not know whether he is gone yet. I am sorry for it, for, if not departed, he probably will not come to you.

The French and Spanish squadrons, of sixty sail, passed by Sir Charles Hardy without meeting; and, on the 14th, chased three of our men-of-war, that were going to join him, into Plymouth. To-day an account is come that the enemy's fleet, of fifty-six sail, is *anchored* before that place. Whether hoping to burn it, or to wait for their transports, I do not pretend to say, as there are different opinions. Hardy will undoubtedly attack them as soon as he can; but the easterly wind keeps him out at sea.

I would write to you, to mark my constant attention; but it is difficult for one so totally uninformed as I am to speak on such great events when pending, and as improper when the sea swarms with privateers, and my letter must pass through so many post offices. You know me well enough to guess at my sentiments. You know me an unalterable Englishman, who loves his country and devoutly wishes its prosperity. Such I am, ardent for England, and ever shall be; it is all an useless old man can do, to pray for its lasting prosperity. The events of war must be accepted with constancy, good or bad. You, a minister of

peace and at a distance, will be anxious for every post. Good news you shall have instantly: I hope I shall have nothing sinister to send you. I may not be at hand immediately to tell you everything: I have female relations whose husbands may be in action, whose spirits I must keep up, and who are in different counties; but I shall never be long from home. Every man must do the utmost he can in his sphere when his country is concerned, and private duties must be attended to too. I have lived long enough to possess calmness enough for my use. It has long been my maxim, that most things are excusable in the passions of youth; but that an old man is bound to think of nothing but what is right, and to be serviceable to others. Virtues, if one has any, shine brightest when put to the trial; but ostentation may taint even them. My father is ever before my eyes—not to attempt to imitate him, for I have none of his matchless wisdom, or unsullied virtues, or heroic firmness; but sixty-two years have taught me to gaze on him with ten thousand times the reverence that, I speak it with deep shame, I felt for him at twenty-two, when he stood before me! I must check this theme—it would carry me too far; and it is at midnight I am writing, and my letter must go to London at eight in the morning. Adieu! my dear Sir: may I send you victories while we are at war; but, being no military man, I may be allowed to wish I could send you peace!

1969. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Aug. 23, at night.

You may think what you please, but I am grieved to say that even more than the empire of the seas is at stake! At present the combined fleets are gone or blown from Plymouth, and the bells at Richmond rang last night as if

they were gone to the bottom. The only conclusion to be drawn at this moment is, that they will fight Sir Charles Hardy before their embarkation takes place. By what I see, much is to be apprehended from so little being apprehended; you would scarce believe half I could tell you. I did indeed this morning, as I came to town, meet thirty-six carriages with ammunition going to the west, not post, and yesterday they worked all day at the Tower, though Sunday. Is it pleasant to know that the fate of one's country may be decided in few weeks? My opinion is, that the enemies will strike in every place they can. They threaten Minorca, and the French minister[1] at Florence sent an order to the Great Duke by his *valet de chambre* not to admit English vessels into Leghorn, and it is supposed a like message has been delivered at Naples, though perhaps in a more decent manner.

You will see in the papers Lord Sandwich's incredulity of Sir Jacob Wheate's[2] account of the combined fleets. When he gave the same relation to Neptune himself[3], and happened to say, they were superior to ours, the quick answer was, 'Oh yes, I suppose they have four or five ships more.'

I have not time nor disposition to write more; even now I have written affectedly, for I have suppressed the various kinds of indignation I feel, and I cannot write long to you unnaturally, yet it is below a man to rail, when England totters to its foundations. Disgraced it is for ever! In what piteous condition it may emerge I know not—if it does emerge; if it does not, happy they who do not live to see its utter destruction.

Yours to the last,

H. Walpole.

Letter 1969.—[1] The Marquis de Barbantane.
[2] Fourth Baronet, a Commander in the navy; d. 1783.
[3] The King.

1970. To Lady Browne.

Tuesday evening.

I can learn so little certainly the state of poor Lady Blandford, that I will beg a few words from your Ladyship. As I have given up all hopes of her, I am heartily grieved that she suffers so long. I pity your Ladyship too and her friends that attend her in this most violent weather. I have not been able to call, having been out of order myself with her complaint; but I think it is going.

1971. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 5, 1779.

If I tell you nothing but truth, my letter will be wondrously short. Since my last, there have been no events but what, in modern phrase, are called *movements*. The combined fleets appeared before Plymouth, and disappeared. Sir Charles Hardy was driven westward. The *Ardent*, mistaking enemies for friends, fell among them; but Captain Boteler was thrown so little off his guard, that it took four ships to master him, and his own sunk as soon as he and his men were received on board the victors'. Monsieur D'Orvilliers[1], admiring his gallantry, applauded it. He modestly replied, 'You will find every captain in our fleet behave in the same manner.' *Un tel déportement donne à penser*. At last we heard of Sir Charles Hardy off Plymouth, and yesterday at Portsmouth. Where the combined are, I know not precisely; but, that such extended lines should not have caught the eye of each other, is very surprising to

Letter 1970.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Mr. W. V. Daniell, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square, W.

Letter 1971.—[1] Louis Guillouet, Comte d'Orvilliers, the admiral commanding the French fleet. He was Keppel's adversary in the indecisive battle off Ushant (in July 1778). He was dismissed from command shortly after this time.

us inexpert in winds and tides. On those I never allow myself to conjecture or reason; and thus I have told you all the little I know, disrobed of the reports and lies of each new day. Opinions, were I informed enough to frame them, would be stale ere they could reach you. I write rather to extract the small truth there is in newspapers and interested relations, than to swell your imagination. My letter must pass through so many inquisitions, that it is necessary it should be able to stand the test.

There is not a word of private news. All the world are politicians, or soldiers; or, rather, both. I hope they will improve more in the latter profession than they have done in the former. Even this little quiet village is grown a camp. Servants are learning to fire all day long, and, I suppose, soon will demand their wages *le pistolet à la main.* I could draw other reflections; but a man who in a month will enter on his grand climacteric, and should busy himself with visions of what may happen when he is in his grave, would resemble Hogarth's debtor, who, in prison, is writing a scheme for paying the debts of the nation.

If I hear anything worth relating before this time to-morrow night you shall hear it. If not, I will not add a syllable to say I have not.

I forgot to tell you, that, the moment I received your letter to your nephew, I sent it to his house in town,—where he was not; and the servant believed he was to set out the next morning, but would send it to him. I have not been able to learn since whether he is gone or not; for your sake I own I wish he may be.

1972. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 5, 1779.

Your Ladyship and I seem to think alike, that when things are very bad, *il n'y a rien à dire.* For my part, I have

put most of my senses and intellects under an interdict. There is little use of them, when one can neither believe one's ears or eyes, nor can comprehend what is doing or not doing, nor can judge on anything like nineteen in twenty of those one meets. Now and then, indeed, I do meet with a person or two who is so candid as to say, 'Well, I own I was mistaken.' So civil a concession stops one's mouth, and prevents one's saying, 'You lie; I know why you chose to mistake.' Yes, Madam, I have been silent, for I did not know what to say, nor am a jot wiser now. Our fleet is at Portsmouth, nor do I form an opinion: I have seen how foul it is to pronounce on manœuvres at sea. Who this time twelvemonth conceived the merits of Admiral Keppel?

I scarce guess where you are, and direct this at random, to Ampthill. I have passed a miserable summer, and, like a joist of an old mansion, am mouldering with it. The gout has passed great part of its *villeggiatura* in my left eye, and now seems settled for autumn in my hip, but incog. under the name of rheumatism. I should be ashamed of complaining with such an exemplar of fortitude hard by, as my poor old friend, Lady Blandford. It will be three weeks on Tuesday since she was seized with a disorder in her bowels. At once, according to all her doctrine and all her practice, she determined to die, and would take nothing to assist nature, but told me when I expostulated with her, that the machine was worn out, and that life was of no value when uncomfortable. She has persisted perfectly cool and in her senses, begging for laudanum, suffering dreadfully, and the more, as you may imagine, from our late more than West Indian heats. She was alive this morning, for nature was determined to prove that she might have lived if she had pleased, though eighty-four[1]. Consider, too, Madam, that it

LETTER 1972.—[1] She died on Sept. 7, 1779.

is not the fashion to wish to die, as it was with the Romans. Miss Stapylton, who is also a virtue personified, has tended her from the moment she heard of her illness, and has literally scarce been in bed since. Miss Stapylton has 30,000*l.* and Lady Blandford nothing. I wish we had some of these exalted characters in breeches! These two women shine like the last sparkles in a piece of burnt paper, which the children call the parson and clerk. Alas! the rest of our old ladies are otherwise employed; they are at the head of fleets and armies. Pray tell me something of yourself and concerns, Madam.

1973. To the Rev. William Mason.

Sept. 5, 1779.

What can I write when I know nothing, and believe little that I hear? Winds and naval manœuvres I do not understand. Everybody contradicts everybody, and each new moment the last. Last week the enemies were between our coast and our fleet, and that was bad. Now our fleet is at Portsmouth, and the enemies nobody knows where, and this is bad. Sum total—we are in a very bad condition, where nothing mends it. It is lucky for you that I cannot crowd my thoughts into a letter, nor can choose to which to give the preference. It is almost insupportable to see England fallen so low—fallen! It dashed itself down: no laws of gravitation could have thrown it so low in a century. It *would* strip itself of men, arms, wealth, fleets, to conquer what it possessed. It would force its friends to be its foes, that it might plunder them, and prevent their continuing to enrich it; and then when a neutral power[1], much more

Letter 1973.—[1] Spain, which had offered to mediate between England and France.

inclined to peace than war, would have extinguished the conflagration—bounce! you may be our enemy too if you please. There!

There is room for meditation even to madness! I am very far from well in body too. All the summer I have been tormented off and on with the gout in one of my eyes, which is now quite removed, but in the garb of rheumatism has fallen on my hip, and confines me to my house, so that I am a chaos of moral reflections. I am trying to extract an elixir of resignation, but as Cato and Brutus themselves allow one not to be perfectly philosophic, that is indifferent to the ruin of one's country, I am in a very Christian mood about personal sufferings, but cannot find a text in the New Testament that bids me not care what becomes of England when I am gone; unless silence gives consent. Adieu!

Yours most cordially,

H. Walpole.

1974. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1779.

The British flag is indeed strangely lowered, Madam. I used to say the English flag; but since disgrace is our lot, I am very willing that the Scotch, who have occasioned, should partake of it. The accounts from the West Indies[1] are much more creditable, and the loss of the enemy much the more considerable—at least, the *Gazette* is to say so to-night. For my own part, I am not at all sorry of Sir Charles Hardy's inaction, not loving a *va-tout*.

You may imagine how much my feelings sympathize with your Ladyship's. Jersey rankles the most of all.

Letter 1974.—[1] Horace Walpole apparently refers to the indecisive action between Byron and D'Estaing off Grenada on July 6, 1779. The advantage, on the whole, was with the French.

This is all I can write at present, having no use but of my right arm. The other is all gout, but I flatter myself it will not be a long fit, though my nights have been very painful. Your kind invitation to Ampthill, Madam, adds to my woes. I do not think I shall ever be able to go any whither on pleasure more. I never now have a week of perfect health together, nor have strength to recover in the intervals. There is nothing shocking in decay, when one has outlived the glory and prosperity of one's country.

1975. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 13, 1779.

I am writing to you at random; not knowing whether or when this letter will go: but your brother told me last night that an officer, whose name I have forgot, was arrived from Jersey, and would return to you soon. I am sensible how very seldom I have written to you—but you have been few moments out of my thoughts. What *they* have been, you who know me so minutely may well guess, and why they do not pass my lips. Sense, experience, circumstances, can teach one to command oneself outwardly, but do not divest a most friendly heart of its feelings. I believe the state of my mind has contributed to bring on a very weak and decaying body my present disorders. I have not been well the whole summer; but for these three weeks much otherwise. It has at last ended in the gout, which to all appearance will be a short fit.

On public affairs I cannot speak. Everything is so exaggerated on all sides, that what grains of truth remain in the sieve would appear cold and insipid; and the great manœuvres you learn as soon as I. In the naval battle between Byron and D'Estaing our captains were worthy of any age in our story.

You may imagine how happy I am at Mrs. Damer's return, and at her not being at Naples, as she was likely to have been, at the dreadful explosion of Vesuvius[1]. Surely it will have glutted Sir William's[2] rage for volcanos! How poor Lady Hamilton's nerves stood it I do not conceive. Oh, mankind! mankind! Are there not calamities enough in store for us, but must destruction be our amusement and pursuit?

I send this to Ditton[3], where it may wait some days; but I would not suffer a sure opportunity to slip without a line. You are more obliged to me for all I do not say, than for whatever eloquence itself could pen.

P.S. I unseal my letter to add, that undoubtedly you will come to the meeting of Parliament, which will be in October. Nothing can or ever did make me advise you to take a step unworthy of yourself. But surely you have higher and more sacred duties than the government of a mole-hill!

1976. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 14, 1779.

I received the print of Sir Nicholas[1] last night by the coach, and thank you kindly.

I have not written very lately for two reasons. When disgrace arrives from every quarter, from east, west, south, what is to be said? secondly, I have been very ill, and have now only the use of one hand. First I had a disorder in my bowels, then an inflammation on my hip which ended in the gout in my elbow, knee, and left hand. The two first

Letter 1975.—[1] On Aug. 8, 1779.
[2] Sir William Hamilton, British Minister at Naples, who was interested in the study of volcanic eruptions.
[3] Where Lord Hertford had then a villa. *Walpole.*

Letter 1976. — [1] Sir Nicholas Carew; see letter to Mason of August 9, 1779.

went off so very quick, that I flattered myself the whole would; now I am hoping I shall be quit for one hand, which is tolerably bad indeed. In one word, and without deluding myself, but for the moment, it is evident that my constitution is extremely impaired, and presents but a melancholy prospect for the rest of my life, which my increasing weakness will not probably allow to be long. Life, which I liked as well as most men, was indeed never less *amiable*. To linger on in illness were a pitiful wish to form, and to outlive the prosperity and glory of one's country were meaner still to wish. Wishing in fact decides nothing, and it is silly to say anything about it; but when the cast of one's mind is forced on those reflections, one is a very disagreeable correspondent.

That *ignis fatuus* of a brighter period, Lord Temple, is dead. He was thrown out of a chaise on a heap of bricks, fractured his skull, was trepanned, and died.

My indisposition will prevent my visit to Nuneham this month, which I had promised. I shall take care how I promise, unless what I should not be sorry to be hindered from executing.

It is ridiculous in gouty sixty-two to make engagements, or undertake a journey, when at least one ought to put into one's chaise a crutch, an hour-glass, and a death's head. My heart to the last will hover about Nuneham, as one of the few spots it still dearly loves, for its own beauties and its excellent possessors. I can frame visions of how happy, how delighted I should have been, had they enjoyed it some years ago, when you, more Orpheus than Orpheus himself, would have made the groves dance after your lyre and pencil, and rendered it what we fancy Penshurst was, but was not, and would have found a Sacharissa congenial to her Waller. I should have been proud to have been Pursuivant to the house of Harcourt, and—but adieu visions! I must

form no more, and what is the theatre on which any man could form them now? Oh, what a weight of lead is the ruin of one's country!

1977. To Sir Horace Mann.

Sept. 16, 1779.

I have received your letter by Colonel Floyd[1], and shall be surprised indeed if Cæsar does not find his own purple a little rumpled, as well as his brother's mantle[2]. But how astonished was I at finding that you did not mention the dreadful eruption of Vesuvius. Surely you had not heard of it! What are kings and their popguns to that wrath of nature! How Sesostris, at the head of an army of nations, would have fallen prostrate to earth before a column of blazing embers eleven thousand feet high! I am impatient to hear more, as you are of the little conflict of us pigmies. Three days after my last set out, we received accounts of D'Estaing's success against Byron and Barrington, and of the capture of Grenada. I do not love to send first reports, which are rarely authentic. The subsequent narrative of the engagement is more favourable. It allows the victory to the enemy, but makes their loss of men much the more considerable. Of ships we lost but one, taken after the fight as going into port to refit. Sir Charles Hardy and D'Orvilliers have not met; the latter is at Brest, the former at Portsmouth. I never wade an inch into what is to be; and into some distant parts of our history, I mean the

Letter 1977.—[1] Afterwards General Sir John Floyd, first Baronet (d. 1818). He had been travelling with Lord Herbert (afterwards eleventh Earl of Pembroke).

[2] Horace Walpole is probably referring to the cavalier treatment of the Grand Duke of Tuscany (brother of the Emperor Joseph) by the court of France. The Grand Duke had been commanded by that court to annul the edict of neutrality, 'by which it was permitted by the powers at war to purchase ammunition and military stores as merchandise.'

eastern, I have never liked to look. I believe it an infamous scene; you know I have always thought it so; and the Marattas are a nation of banditti very proper to scourge the heroes of Europe, who go so far to plunder and put themselves into their way. Nature gave to mankind a beautiful world, and larger than it could occupy,—for, as to the eruption of Goths and Vandals occasioned by excess of population, I very much doubt it; and mankind prefers deforming the ready paradise, to improving and enjoying it. Ambition and mischief, which one should not think were natural appetites, seem almost as much so as the impulse to propagation; and those pious rogues, the clergy, preach against what nature forces us to practise (or she could not carry on her system), and not twice in a century say a syllable against the lust of destruction! Oh, one is lost in moralizing, as one is in astronomy! In the ordinance and preservation of the great universal system one sees the Divine Artificer, but our intellects are too bounded to comprehend anything more.

Lord Temple is dead by an accident. I never had any esteem for his abilities or character. He had grown up in the bask of Lord Chatham's glory, and had the folly to mistake half the rays for his own. The world was not such a dupe; and his last years discovered a selfish restlessness, and discovered to him, too, that no mortal regarded him but himself.

The Lucans are in my neighbourhood, and talk with much affection of you. Adieu!

1978. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 24, at night.

I can learn no more of Lord Macartney, Madam, than your Ladyship sees in the papers, that he is near

Rochelle[1]. I have written to Madame du Deffand to beg she will do him any service in her power, though he must have more powerful mediators; but sometimes by accident a straw may be more useful than a white wand.

There was a *Gazette* this morning that will frighten the combined fleets out of their senses. We have destroyed a whole navy of walnut-shells at a place as well known as Pharsalia, called Penobscot[2]. If Great Britain was taken, and we reconquered an ait in the Thames, I believe the *Gazette* would think the latter only worth mentioning; but all we do and do not is too silly and contemptible to dwell on!

Poor Lady Lincoln has a new misfortune, and has lost her son[3]. Lord Thomas, the successor, is in America, and has more chances than one against returning[4].

I was in town yesterday for the first time of my going out these weeks, as my left hand is still muffled. I went to give some orders about my new house, with which I am much pleased, now it is painted and papered, though in the plainest manner possible. You are so good, Madam, as to mention the air of Southampton to me. I believe the sea air would do me good if anything would; but at present I am too low and too weak to determine on anything, or to bear anything but perfect quiet. You would not know me, for instead of being perpetually occupied about some trifle or other, I lie and doze half the day on the couch, and at night count the day gone with satisfaction.

It is very foolish or very vain, probably both, to fill half a letter with oneself at such a moment; but is the public

LETTER 1978.—[1] Lord Macartney had been captured at Grenada, and carried to France as a prisoner of war.

[2] A flotilla sent out from Massachusetts against a newly-established English station on the Penobscot river was destroyed in August by a squadron under Admiral Sir George Collier.

[3] Henry Pelham-Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, aged two.

[4] Lord Thomas Pelham-Clinton, afterwards third Duke of Newcastle.

a better theme? Where can one descry a prospect that promises a gleam of hope? Flying from D'Orvilliers, beaten by D'Estaing, and comforted by gathering a wreath of sea-weeds at Penobscot! How low is a nation sunk, when its understanding may be so insulted! Whenever the King of Prussia was beaten, he said he was beaten; he never sang *Te Deum* for putting to flight a handful of Hussars.

Adieu! Madam, I am sick of the times, and sick of myself, and so I doubt are you too.

1979. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1779.

Though I am vexed at your lying fallow, I know not how to reprove it. With what spirit could an African Homer have finished an Hannibaliad when *delenda esset Carthago*? Horace and Virgil could prank away, because they shared in the spoils of their country, yet you might imitate a worthier Roman, and instead of

turning your harp into a harpsichord,

you might, like Tully, write *de finibus bonorum et malorum*, if the latter should meet their deserts; one would think it likely, when Anti-Sejanus[1] begins to demolish the statues of Sejanus.

I am sorry Paul Jones has exchanged *the Friths* for the coasts of Yorkshire for both reasons.

America is again to be conquered; Sir George Collier[2] having, like the man-mountain Gulliver, destroyed the

Letter 1979.—[1] Rev. James Scott, formerly a political writer under the signature 'Anti-Sejanus.' A dispute with his parishioners caused him to take refuge in York at this time, where (according to a letter of Mason to Walpole) he was employed in loudly abusing his patron, Lord Sandwich—to which Horace Walpole probably refers when he writes of the demolition of the statues of Sejanus.

[2] Vice-Admiral Sir George Collier, Knight (1738–1795).

whole naval force of the colonies at Penobscot, which being a famous port of which I had never heard, I suppose is the Plymouth of Blefuscu. There is a post, however, lost of great consequence, but if the *Gazette* does not own its importance, nobody will mind it.

When do you look southward? I am removing into my new house, and am much pleased with it; of myself I can only say, that for these two days I have mended. I am taking the bark, and think it is of service; but I have more ground to recover than is likely at sixty-two, and with so weak and shattered a frame, though the foundation is so strangely strong.

They are still writing *éloges* and verses on Voltaire at Paris, which would not be worth telling you, but as it has occasioned an admirable *bon mot* of Madame du Deffand: she said that Voltaire 'subissoit le sort des mortels, d'être après leur mort la pâture des vers.' There is no adding anything to this, but that I wish you were here.

1980. To Earl Harcourt.

Oct. 1779.

Mortifications never come single. Pain not only makes its *prerogative* felt, but deprives one of collateral satisfactions that might compensate. It annuls promises, and, like other imperial tyrants, roots out both wishes and virtues. I had set the remains of my heart on passing part of September at Nuneham, my dear Lord; but, after a very uncomfortable summer, in which I had scarce a day of health, I was confined to my couch the whole month with the gout, and have now the use but of one hand. Constitutional evils one learns to bear, but when the *constitution* is undermined, the breach lets in any enemy. In one word, my nerves are so shattered, that at last my spirits are affected, and I am less

fit to wait on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, from the feebleness of my mind, than of my poor person. I have not slept one night out of my own houses since I had the honour of seeing you, not even at Park Place, which I had settled for my first stage to Nuneham. I can comfort myself only by your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's overflowing goodness to my nieces; and as they are of an age to taste the fullness of joy, they will be better company than one who, even in so favourite an elysium, could not stifle many melancholy reflections; for indignation itself must sour into despondence, when it sees no prospect of any kind of redress. Shame and disgrace correct neither the million nor the master, and both seem to hope from defeat, what success alone used to delude fools into bestowing on knaves; but then, indeed, the latter had parts. Now they put me in mind of what Charles II said of a silly preacher that was much admired in his parish; 'I suppose,' said his Majesty, 'that his nonsense suits their nonsense.'

My sole hope at present is peace. Victory would rivet our chains; and next to the insolence of Tories, I abhor the insolence of the French. A peace would be so bad an one, that at least it would complete the ignominy of the last five years, and yet leave us some foundation to recommence our career, should the nation ever awake from its lethargy. In short, my dear Lord, decaying as I am, and bastardized as my country is, I cannot part with the darling visions of the liberty and glory of England. Is not it too grievous, too, to feel ourselves in as bad a plight as before the Union? Then Scotland and France were allies and harassed us; now they are foes, and yet we are in still greater peril! Paul Jones, to be sure, has been agreeable; and were Oxford not so near Nuneham, I should not have sighed if he could have sailed up the Isis, and committed sacrilege on some college plate, though good Dr. Johnson holds sacrilege the sin against the

Holy Ghost, who, I suppose he thinks, has a peculiar fondness for silver basins and ewers. So, I dare say, does Bishop Butler, and of all sterling utensils, thinks the consecrated plate of Lambeth the holiest of holies. Did you hear, my Lord, that that renegade priest wrote to Sir Edward, that if there were any toleration allowable to opponents, your Lordship would deserve to be saved from the flames (he hopes to see) in Smithfield!

If my cousin, Miss Fauquier, is with you, ten thousand compliments to her. Tell her that the most pious of Princes, who in the tumult of civil affairs never neglects religion, has lately taken on him the dispensation of cathedral fees at Windsor, and endeavoured to put them on a new footing; but as hornets love honey, though they do not make it, one of the canons withstands the head of the Church, and defends the property of faith against its defender.

Adieu, my best Lord; excuse and pity me. You will be charmed, I flatter myself, with poor Horatia[1], who is not at all well, but has behaved with a gentleness, sweetness, modesty, that are lovely. She has had no romantic conduct, concealed all she could, and discovered nothing she felt but by her looks. She is now more pleasing, though she looks ill, by her silent softness, than before by her youthful vivacity. Maria[2], almost as much wounded and to be pitied, carries off another kind of misfortune with a noble spirit. I will say no more, but that Mr. F.[3] has had the

LETTER 1980. — [1] Lady Horatia Waldegrave, whose marriage with the Duke of Ancaster had been prevented by his death.

[2] Lady Maria Waldegrave, at this time greatly admired by the Earl of Egremont, who, however, seemed unable to make up his mind as to his intentions. At a later period he became engaged to Lady Maria, but his conduct put an end to the affair.

[3] Apparently Mr. Fawkener. According to the *Selwyn Correspondence* (vol. iv. p. 141) he was attracted by Lady Laura Waldegrave, the eldest of the sisters, but his suit was disapproved of by her mother, the Duchess of Gloucester.

confidence to make me a visit with his father-in-law[4]. Luckily, the Duke arrived the moment after. F. said, 'Do not let us keep you.' 'No, Sir,' said I, 'that you cannot do,' and left them. Your Lordship is such a father to these poor girls, that I am sure you will forgive my troubling you with my anxieties about them.

I ought to make an apology for my whole letter, but, alas! my Lord, there are few to whom men of our sentiments can talk freely, and then it is no wonder that one's heart overflows through one's pen. Mine, you know, is devoted to your Lordship.

1981. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1779.

It is very difficult to write at such a time as this, when there have been no events, are no good prospects, and when we have not abundance of friends in the post offices abroad, through which one's letters are to pass. You must remember this position, and curb your impatience when you do not hear from me often.

Nothing has happened since my last, though near a month ago, but the surprisal of Stony Point[1] by the Americans, where they made eight hundred prisoners. These events seem trifles to me, who look on America as totally lost, and do not take account of the modes by which we part with the ruins.

D'Orvilliers is certainly laid aside, though his disgrace is palliated. The combined fleets have as surely lost many thousands by the small-pox. We are bidden at this very time to expect their reappearance. The year is so far ad-

[4] His step-father, Governor Pownall.

Letter 1981.—[1] On the Hudson, taken by the English under General Pattison in May, and retaken by the Americans under General Wayne on July 15, 1779.

vanced that we must know soon whether any blow will be attempted, or the campaign conclude. In my own opinion, the principal effort will be against Ireland; but I do not trust my guesses a yard out of my sight, and keep still closer guard upon my ears, for almost everybody's mouth seems to have a design on one's senses. They tell one lies as solemnly as Swift related his voyages to Brobdingnag and Lilliput.

Notions there are, or have been lately, that the two Empresses wish to mediate a peace. I do believe that on France notifying to the Emperor that she should send some troops to Flanders to impose neutrality on the Dutch, he replied, *À la bonne heure*; but, for every squadron, he would dispatch two. It cannot be the interest of the rest of Europe that the Bourbons should be sole sovereigns of the ocean; nor should I think that, so excellent a milch cow as England has been to Germany, the latter would like to see the pail demolished, though the cow has kicked it down herself, when it was out of reach of everybody else. But adieu retrospect! it is as idle as prophecy, the characteristic of which is, never to be believed where alone it could be useful—i. e. in its own country.

I complained unjustly of your silence on Vesuvius, having since received the view of its terrors in the compass of a card, excellently done. I thank you much for it.

Of late—indeed, for the entire summer—I have been much out of order, and thought my constitution breaking fast; but it exerted its internal strength, and, when I was lowest, threw out the gout in several joints. In short, I have stamina of iron, in a case, as I used to call yours, of wet brown paper. I am now taking the bark, and find great benefit from it: nay, I am removing into a new house in London, that I bought last winter, as if I believed I had several years to come. It is in Berkeley Square,

whither for the future you must direct. It is a charming situation, and a better house than I wanted—in short, I would not change my two pretty mansions for any in England: but I do not shut my eyes on the transitory tenure of them; though, if mortals did not coin visions for themselves, they would sit with folded arms, and take no thought for the morrow! I hold visions to be wisdom; and would deny them only to ambition, which exists by destruction of the visions of everybody else. Like Vesuvius, it overwhelms the fair face of the world, though to reign over cinders, and only lift its head above the desolation it has occasioned, and cannot enjoy.

1982. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Thursday morning.

I am come to town to take possession of Berkeley Square; and your Ladyship's letter of the 9th, which, N.B., I received *but* yesterday, gives me great hopes of finding you in town. How happy I shall be if you are, and that I may catch a glimpse of you after dinner!

1983. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, my inauguration day, Oct. 14, 1779.

I came to town this morning to take possession of Berkeley Square, and am as pleased with my new habitation as I can be with anything at present. Lady Shelburne's being queen of the palace over against me, has improved the view since I bought the house, and I trust will make your Ladyship not so shy as you were of Arlington Street.

I stopped at the turnpike, and sent to Grosvenor Place,

Letter 1982.—Hitherto printed as part of the letter to Lady Ossory of Nov. 13, 1777. (See *Notes and Queries*, Sept. 15, 1900.)

but no tidings of you; however, as I shall stay in town till Saturday, I do not despair, having left a note[1] for you. On Saturday I must return, as my Royalties leave the Pavilions on Sunday, and go to Blackheath.

The catastrophe of the poor old lady that you killed with kindness has touched me exceedingly, not on her account, for having been contemporary of Lady Gouran[2], I conclude she was ancient; and then is not it charming to be smothered with joy? but I feel tenderly for your Ladyship, who must have suffered for your most innocent good nature.

I know nothing of the authenticity of Lord Macartney's and D'Estaing's letters, but believe they are thought genuine. Madame du Deffand, in a letter I received yesterday, tells me they are very angry with the former for his great indiscretions on shipboard. He is at Limoges, where the Comte de Broglie has seen and commends him. I have written again to-night to my friend in his favour, and have told her that Lord Macartney has always been *deservedly* a great favourite of the ladies, and that as women govern in France, she must interest them in his behalf. I hope Lady Macartney will forgive me if he earns his release.

It is firmly believed that D'Estaing is gone with fourteen ships of the line to New York[3], where Arbuthnot has but seven. This will exceedingly shorten the American war. The combined fleets, now said to amount to seventy, are expected forth again. France, I am persuaded, is impatient to shorten the whole war. I have heard to-night at an Irish house, whereon I do not entirely pin my faith, that Lord North says he fears the Irish more than the English

LETTER 1983.—[1] Probably the previous letter.

[2] Anne (d. 1744), second daughter and co-heir of Sir John Robinson, second Baronet; m. (1718) Richard Fitzpatrick, first Baron Gowran, grandfather of Lord Ossory. She brought the estate of Farming Woods into the family.

[3] D'Estaing intended to take Savannah *en route* and then to proceed to New York. He met with a severe defeat at the former place, and abandoning any further views, returned to France.

Parliament. At the same place I was told that an American negotiator is here offering treaty, on condition of total silence on the word *independence*, and that his offer had been rejected. By an odd collision of circumstances, I did discover one truth, whatever the rest were. The Bishop of Derry had said there that he had proposed to the administration to take off the test in favour of the Catholics. I do know that he has said that it was to be taken off; which I do not believe.

Now I am sending coals to Ireland, I must add an excellent story I was told at the same place. That Lilliputian, Lady Newhaven[4], arriving at Tunbridge, desired Mrs. Vesey to explain to her and instruct her in the customs and news of the place. A man arrived ringing a bell—'for what?' said my Lady; 'Oh,' replied Mrs. Vesey, 'to notify your arrival.' At that instant the man bawled out, 'At one o'clock, at Mr. Pinchbeck's great room, will be shown the surprising tall woman.'

I hope these Hibernian tales will satisfy your Ladyship in the room of the Middlesex election[5], of which I know no more than the man in the moon.

The invitation to Farming Woods will not want the codicil of Fotheringay, which I have seen, and Kirby[6],—I forget whose—if ever I recover my youth and spirits, or, at least, the latter, which is not very probable, while I remember the happy days of my spring, and the glorious days of my autumn! When the chill of winter is sharpened by the blasts of national disgrace, the only comfort of age is, that there are no more seasons to follow.

[4] Hon. Frances Allen (d. 1801), daughter of second Viscount Allen; m. (1758) Sir William Mayne, afterwards first Baron Newhaven. She was a dwarf.

[5] An election for Middlesex county; Thomas Wood was returned on Oct. 29, 1779.

[6] Probably the seat of the Hattons, three miles from Rockingham, in Northamptonshire, noted in the last century for its gardens and plantations.

William Windham

from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

I know I do not wish for one more summer, if I am to pass it like the last! Nor can I see on what to build for expecting that the next will be more comfortable.

1984. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 14, 1779.

I HAVE been desired, and never acquiesced with more pleasure, both for the sake of the recommended and of yours, to give a recommendatory letter to you for Mr. Windham[1], a gentleman of large fortune in Norfolk, who is obliged to go to Italy for the recovery of his health, which I most earnestly wish he may retrieve there. He is young, but full of virtues, knowledge, and good sense; and, in one word, of the old rock—of which so few gems are left in this wretched country! His ill health has prevented my being much acquainted with him, which I regret; but I well know his worth, and respect him exceedingly. In short, this is not a common letter of recommendation, but one that I shall confirm in my next by the post. I do not beg attentions for him; those you have even for the least deserving, from your own good nature: but I entreat and advise you to get acquainted with Mr. Windham as fast as you can: your friendship will soon follow, and then he can want nothing in my power to ask,—unless his modesty should prevent his pressing you for letters of recommendation to other parts of Italy, and therefore I beg them for him, and, indeed, every service you can perform for him. My unlimited expressions will tell you how confident I am that your goodness will not be misplaced, as it has often

LETTER 1984.—[1] Of Felbrigge. He was Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Northington, 1782, which post he soon resigned on account of his health. In 1784 he was chosen member for Norwich. *Walpole.*—William Windham (1750–1810), the well-known Whig statesman.

been on travelling boys, and their more unlicked governors. Mr. Windham is not so young as to want to be formed, nor so old as to be insensible to the merit of others; and, therefore, I trust you will both be mutually pleased with each other. I envy him a little the satisfaction of visiting you; and, as he is a genuine Englishman, should lament his being forced to leave his own country, if I thought its honour or principles retrievable; and if I was not sure, by what I feel myself, that his health would be but more prejudiced by his remaining spectator of its blindness and disgraces.

1985. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 21, 1779.

Perhaps you have been expecting that the combined fleets would take Ireland—perhaps they may, though not so easy, when a nation knows how to assert its rights; but in the meantime the Irish have chosen to take their kingdom into their own hands. They have twenty-eight thousand men in arms, *a committee* of whom attended the Address to the Castle. I dare to say Mr. Edmund Burke does not approve of these proceedings, for the twenty-eight thousand are all Protestants. He would, I suppose, have liked better the advice of the Honble. and Right Reverend father in God, Dr. Frederic Hervey, Bishop of Derry, who told a person I know that he had proposed to the administration in England to take off the test from the Roman Catholics; and though it was rejected, he told another person that it was to be taken off.

It looks as if the naval campaign were over, but I do not know. The re-settlement of the administration on the old bottom, only with some crossing over and figuring in, which you see in all the papers, I am told will take place.

You perceive by my date that I am removed into my new house. It is seeming to take a new lease of life. I was born in Arlington Street, lived there about fourteen years, returned thither, and passed thirty-seven more; but I have sober monitors that warn me not to delude myself.

My four nieces are at Nuneham. I saw Mrs. Harcourt on Tuesday at Sion Hill, come up to kiss hands for General Burgoyne's regiment[1]; no doubt to the great joy of Bishop Butler. What charming children the little Carmarthens[2] are!

I shall return to Strawberry on Monday for about a week, and then be chiefly in London. You will not tell me your own intended motions, and therefore I shall leave you to your own vagaries.

I heard t'other day of *The World as it goes*, a poem published last spring, but which I had never seen. It is by that infamous Combe, the author of the *Diaboliad*. It has many easy poetic lines, imitates Churchill, and is full as incoherent and absurd in its plan as the worst of the latter's. I do not wonder that it made no noise. Adieu! I send no compliments to your anthems, for I am not in charity with them.

1986. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1779.

I am fortunate, Madam, that you have had a parenthesis of Bedfordshire neighbours between *fixed air*, *electricity*, *solar microscopes*, and every topic in and out of creation; and my barren narrow conversation, which is confined to few ideas

Letter 1985.—[1] The 16th Light Dragoons, of which her husband, Colonel Harcourt, had been appointed colonel.

[2] The Marquis of Carmarthen's three children by his first wife:—the Earl of Danby (afterwards sixth Duke of Leeds), Lady Mary Osborne (afterwards Countess of Chichester), and Lord Francis Godolphin Osborne (afterwards Lord Godolphin).

and less knowledge than any man's who has lived so long, had opportunities of seeing so much, and yet has stored up but a heap of indigested trifles, and fathomed no earthly thing to the bottom, nor any heavenly one to the top—which, in truth, I believe, can be done a very little way: however, I honour natural philosophers in every one of their walks. They aim at enlightening mankind; most other professions at deceiving.

I have always heard that Bowood[1] was magnificent: you will not wonder that accounts of noble palaces raise a sigh in my breast, not of envy, but remembrance!—but alas! what will all our seats be but monuments of past splendour? As I should not like to die in an unfinished moment, though perhaps preferable to the catastrophe, I wish for peace, to know what is to be left. I doubt many turbulent scenes are to pass first; and, though one expected them much sooner, it is plain that causes have at last their effects; and, though one is often disappointed in the calculations of wisdom, folly and presumption produce their natural consequences. These multiply daily; and, being so numerous and so repugnant to each other, the medicines that would, as in bodily distempers, cure some, are prejudicial to others. For instance, can your Ireland be redressed, without danger of producing insurrections here? Can the two islands jar, and not facilitate the views of France and Spain? I have reason to believe that the combined fleets will again appear before the conclusion of the campaign, though the government thinks not. They still talk at Paris of invasion; and, having threatened it so often vainly, may have rendered it more facile by our incredulity. But what signify conjectures? As Cato says, Plato cannot end them, and the sword must.

Letter 1986.—[1] Lord Ossory's sister had lately married the owner of Bowood, the Earl of Shelburne.

My constitution, which set out under happy stars, seems to keep pace with the change of constellations, and fail like the various members of the empire. I am now confined with the rheumatism in my left arm, and find no benefit from our woollen manufacture, which I flattered myself would always be a resource. On Monday I shall remove to Shelburne Square, and watch impatiently the opening of the Countess's windows; though with all her and her Earl's goodness to me, I doubt I shall profit little of either. I do not love to be laughed at or pitied, and dread exposing myself to numbers of strange servants and young people, who wonder what Methuselah does out of his coffin. Lady Blandford is gone; her antediluvian dowagers dispersed; amongst whom I was still reckoned a lively young creature. Wisdom I left forty years ago to Welbore Ellis, and must not pretend to rival him now when he is grown so rich by the semblance of it. Since I cannot then act old age with dignity, I must keep myself out of the way, and weep for England in a corner.

I am glad the appearances in Miss Fox[2] are better. The elder Lady Albemarle has had a stroke of palsy, but is better. Lady Sarah[3] came to town with her, and still looks prettier and fresher than an angel of Correggio.

Whither are your next motions, Madam? You lately talked of not seeing London until the roses appear. That is a little perverse, and very uncomfortable to me, since, seldom dining abroad, I should be happy to sit by your fire in the long evenings; but you scarce arrive till the *tourbillon* of Ranelagh surrounds you. Well! I must have done with wishes, which are foolish but in youth, when *time may* accomplish them.

[2] Hon. Caroline Fox, daughter of second Baron Holland, and niece of Lord Ossory.

[3] Lady Sarah Bunbury.

1987. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 31, 1779.

Your last letter was so full of encomiums on my tragedy, that, veteran author as I am, it made me blush. But I recollected your partiality, and then I accepted the motive with pleasure, though I must decline the exaggerations. It is plain that I am sincerely modest about it, for I not only never thought of its appearing on the stage, but have not published it. It has indeed received greater honour than any of its superiors; for Lady Di Beauclerk has drawn seven scenes of it, that would be fully worthy of the best of Shakespeare's plays—such drawings, that Salvator Rosa and Guido could not surpass their expression and beauty. I have built a closet on purpose for them here at Strawberry Hill. It is called the *Beauclerk closet*; and whoever sees the drawings, allows that no description comes up to their merit—and then, they do not shock and disgust, like their original, the tragedy.

I am heartily glad you have had your nephew[1]; I speak in the past tense, for he will certainly be set out on his return before this can reach Florence. It was uncommon merit to take so long a journey for a moment. I have sent you one to replace him, not to compensate; for a stranger cannot rival or equal your nephew: but one who, as soon as you are acquainted with him, will be a great comfort to you, from his virtues, sense, and manners. It is a young Mr. Windham, a gentleman of Norfolk, of a very considerable estate, who is in a bad state of health, and travels for it. I am not so much acquainted with him as with his character, which is excellent; and then he is a Whig of the stamp that was current in our country in my father's time.

Letter 1987.—[1] Sir Horace Mann the younger.

I do not always send you a tally to the letters of recommendation I am sometimes forced to give; but that which he carries to you, I confirm by this in all points. I advise you to be intimate with him; I will warrant the safety of his connection, and I beg you to assist him with recommendations wherever you can. He is a particular friend of my great-nephew [2], Lord Cholmondeley's cousin; but one I should have liked for my own friend, if the disparity of our ages would have allowed it; or if it were a time for me to make friends, when I could only leave them behind me.

Well; but you had rather I had been talking politics, or telling you news. The scene is not mended, for another is opened. Ireland, taking advantage of the moment, and of forty thousand volunteers that they have in arms and regimented, has desired—that is, demanded—*free trade.* If we are not cured of our American visions at last, I hope we have learnt wisdom enough to perceive that prerogative is the weakest of all chimeras when opposed by *free men in arms*: it has cost us the diadem of the colonies, as it did James II those of three kingdoms; and therefore I trust we shall have more sense in Ireland. We still kick at the independence of America, though we might as well pursue our title to the crown of France.

Our fleet is at sea, and a most noble one. They still talk of the reappearance of the combined fleets from Brest. It is probable that the winds of November will be the most considerable victors; for the season has been so very serene in general, that I think the equinoctial tempests, like the squadrons, have passed the autumn in harbour, and that they will all come forth together.

Lord Stormont has got the late Lord Suffolk's seals of Secretary [3]. There were to have been other arrangements,

[2] George James, son of Horace Walpole's nephew, Hon. and Rev. Robert Cholmondeley.

[3] Secretary of State for the Southern Province.

but they are suspended; and it is said this new preferment is more likely to produce resignations than settlement: but I only tell you common report; which is not at all favourable to Lord Stormont's promotion. He has a fair character, and is a friend of General Conway; but he is a Scot, and Lord Mansfield's nephew, which the people mind much more than his character: the other advantage they will certainly pay no regard to at all. It is great pity unpopular things are done at such a moment!

Well! I trust I shall see General Conway within a week; I go to town to-morrow, expecting him. He has acted in his diminutive islet with as much virtue and popularity as Cicero in his large Sicily, and with much more ability as a soldier, a commander—I am heartily glad he was disappointed of showing how infinitely more he is a hero.—The conclusion of my letter on Tuesday from London.

Nov. 1, Berkeley Square.

My letter is concluded, for I have nothing to add, but that the town says Lord Gower, President of the Council, will resign. Mind, I do not warrant this, nor anything that is not actually past.

1988. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1.
Too late for the post.

You bid me send you all the news. Pray, of what sort would you have, Madam?—or do you act the innocent, and ask, though you know more than I do? Most likely, for I know no more than the herb-women in St. James's market. But I have no objection to being a dupe, if you have a mind I should be one. It is but one step below ignorance; so then, you do not know that the Lord Pre-

sident of the Council [1], such an age ago as last Wednesday, would not attend to swear in Lord Stormont, but walked in the Park during the solemnity, to the great scandal of all true Catholics.

In the next place your Ladyship, poor soul, does not know that the Paymaster of the Army [2] holds all you poor souls very cheap who do not know that Lord Gower is *out* —why, has he resigned? has he resigned?—no, not yet, the King has not been in town.

I can gratify your Ladyship's curiosity or *finesse* no farther, for I truly know no more. Nay, I hold this state machinery or mystery in the same light as the Middlesex election. Objects that are gigantic on some horizons are straws on others. When every part of the fabric totters, who can care whether a board starts in the floor of the drawing-room or closet, except some *joiner* who hopes his bill will be paid before the palace tumbles? Contrary to Lord Shelburne's opinion, there are reasons to think that the combined fleets will, if not yet sailed, still leave Brest, to the amount of fifty-two sail. Sir Charles Hardy has forty-three; but, come the blow this year or not, what is to amend our situation?—will more losses in other parts?—will greater difficulties and dissatisfactions at home? Will Ireland discourage France? Will new taxes encourage England? Will perseverance in measures that open new calamities everywhere, close them? Where can France or Spain be wounded by us? When we cannot protect Jamaica, can we reconquer America? When ministers begin to be afraid of keeping their places, will they intimidate others—except by their example? If *anybody* [3] will be his own minister, will he not be his only minister? They have long thrown all the blame on him, and now it looks as if they would throw their offices on him too.

LETTER 1988.—[1] Earl Gower. [2] Richard Rigby. [3] The King.

I met Lady Bute this evening; she expects Lord Macartney[4] every hour. Thank you for the sight of Lady Macartney's letter, Madam; but as I do not visit her, I cannot possibly on this occasion: it would look like assuming merit on good offices, which I could only attempt, but which I have not the smallest reason to think contributed to his return. Pray, Madam, do not call this, or anything of the kind, modesty and humility—it is only humiliation, which is but pride mortified.

I see myself a poor invalid, threatened with a painful and irksome conclusion, and mortified at seeing the decay of my country more rapid than my own. Ambition I never felt, but was content with being an individual in so free and splendid a nation. 'Tis all gone, Madam; and methinks one sinks in one's own estimation in proportion.

When I mention my woes, however, it is to excuse my frequent excuses, not to complain of my lot, which has been singularly happy and fortunate. I am so at this moment, for I expect General Conway this week; and I shall think him as much recovered, as if I had seen a bomb in the air over his head.

Nov. 2.

I have heard nothing new to-day. If you can explain what I have been telling you,—and if you are not in the secret,—nay, if you are, perhaps you may not understand it, be so good as to decipher to me; but I am in no hurry. When Titus was at the gates of Jerusalem, can one read with patience the squabbles of the Pharisees?

P.S. I must commend the honesty of your Milesians, Madam. If forty thousand Scots were in arms asking redress, do you think they would have let the East Indian fleet depart from Limerick before they were satisfied?

[4] He was Lady Bute's son-in-law.

1989. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Saturday evening, 6th.

If there is a sprig of truth left growing in Bedfordshire, I entreat your Ladyship to spare me a cutting, for there is not a leaf to be had in town for love or money; everything is so dear! and yet falsehood bears a still higher price. Jamaica is taken, and it is not; the combined fleets are sailed, and they are not; the East Indiamen are arrived, and are not; Lord Gower[1] is out, and is not; Lord Northington is dead[2], and is not.

The edition of Gower, privately printed at Glasgow, says he has been out these three weeks; but the critics say that cannot be so, for, &c.

Lord Weymouth's servants say he is to resign[3]. Some say Lord Bathurst is to be President[4], and Lady Cranborne[5] says, her Lord. Lord Macartney is come, but we have missed each other. They say he is dismally lean and black. George[6] and the Signorina[7] arrived last night. Lord Mountstuart is at Paris—or not. You see how friendly I am, Madam. Nobody tells you anything, and I tell you both sides of everything. Your humble servant,

Janus.

P.S. Very good sport in Nubia.

Letter 1989.—[1] Earl Gower resigned on Nov. 24, 1777.

[2] Lord Northington lived until 1783.

[3] Viscount Weymouth resigned on Nov. 25, 1779.

[4] Lord Bathurst succeeded Lord Gower as President of the Council.

[5] Lady Amelia Mary Hill, third daughter of first Earl of Hillsborough (afterwards Marquis of Downshire); m. (1773) James Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, afterwards Earl and Marquis of Salisbury; d. 1835.

[6] George Selwyn.

[7] Maria Fagniani.

1990. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1779.

I WENT this morning to Zoffani's to see his picture or portrait of the Tribune at Florence; and, though my letter will not put on its boots these three days, I must write while the subject is fresh in my head. The first thing I looked for was *you*—and I could not find you. At last I said, 'Pray, who is *that* Knight of the Bath?'—'Sir Horace Mann.'—'Impossible!' said I. My dear Sir, how you have left me in the lurch!—you are grown fat, jolly, young; while I am become the skeleton of Methuselem.

The idea I always thought an absurd one. It is rendered more so by being crowded with a flock of travelling boys, and one does not know nor care whom. You and Sir John Dick, as Envoy and Consul, are very proper. The Grand Ducal family would have been so too. Most of the rest are as impertinent as the names of churchwardens stuck up in parishes whenever a country church is repaired and white-washed.

The execution is good; most of the styles of painters happily imitated; the labour and finishing infinite; and no confusion, though such a multiplicity of objects and colours. The Titian's Venus, as the principal object, is the worst finished; the absence of the Venus of Medici is surprising[1]; but the greatest fault is in the statues. To distinguish them, he has made them all of a colour, not imitating the different hues of their marbles; and thus they all look alike, like casts in plaster of Paris: however, it is a great and curious work—though Zoffani might have been better employed. His talent is representing natural humour: I look upon him

LETTER 1990.—[1] This was an oversight; the Venus is in the picture. *Walpole.*

as a Dutch painter polished or civilized. He finishes as highly, renders nature as justly, and does not degrade it, as the Flemish school did, who thought a man vomiting, a good joke; and would not have grudged a week on finishing a belch, if mere labour and patience could have compassed it.

Mr. Windham, who I thought half-way to Florence, did not set out till last Monday. Of martial and political news I can tell you nothing new and positive. It does not appear that the combined fleets have come forth again. The mortality, I believe, has been great amongst them, and disagreement. The Spanish Admiral would not cede the *pas* to Du Chaffaut[2]. Daranda[3] and Monsieur de Sartine[4] were forced to go to Brest to obtain precedence for the latter. These two *civil* ministers have been principal incendiaries of the war. The present rumour is that D'Estaing has taken Long Island, and blocked up Admiral Arbuthnot;—but the account comes from France.

The Irish seem more temperate; and, if we are so, it is to be hoped that harmony will be restored.

There have been no more resignations or promotions. Some changes are expected—but you will have no *Anticipation*[5] from my shop; I deal only in past wares—and even those one cannot always procure genuine. The Parliament is at hand, and may be a busy scene. I have had the sense to make it a season of repose to myself. It is the summer that in time of war is the high tide of anxiety to me: then I am trembling for my friends.

[2] Louis Charles (1708-1794), Comte du Chaffault de Besne, successor of D'Orvilliers in the command of the French fleet.

[3] The Spanish Ambassador at Paris. *Walpole.*

[4] French Minister of the Marine. *Walpole.*

[5] A pamphlet by that title, giving drafts of speeches that would probably be made in the Parliament, and burlesquing most of the speakers, was published just before the meeting, and was much admired. It was written by Mr. Tickell. *Walpole.*

Well! but are you really so portly a personage as Zoffani has represented you? I envy you. Everybody can grow younger and plump, but I. My brother is as sleek as an infant, and, though seventy-three, is still quite beautiful. He has a charming colour, and not a wrinkle. I told him, when Lord Orford was in danger, that he might think what he would, but I would carry him into the Court of Chancery, and put it to the consciences of the judges, which of us two was the elder by eleven years?

16th.

Yes, it is the 16th, and not a syllable of news more. *Allez-vous-en, ma lettre;* Sir Horace expects you.

P.S. I do allow Earl Cowper a place in the Tribune: an English Earl, who has never seen his earldom, and takes root and bears fruit at Florence, and is proud of a pinchbeck principality in a third country, is as great a curiosity as any in the Tuscan collection.

Second P.S. I had just folded my letter, but not sealed it:—a knock at the door. Who do you think it was?—your nephew! Oh, how glad! Why, you have flown on the wings of the winds!—So he had—in such a storm on Saturday night, that I believe it tossed him over the houses, and set him down in Berkeley Square. He looks as well as possible. I read my letter to him, and he swears your portrait is as like you as two peas. Well! then I have no idea of you!

After exhausting Florence and England, I questioned him about Vesuvius: he repeated Sir William Hamilton's account of it to you, and I long to see it. I had not heard of the insurrection and frenzy of the people. You would oblige me much if you would let it be transcribed, and send me a copy of his letter. As your nephew said justly, it

was such a wonderful picture of nature and human nature in convulsion!

Adieu! I have not time to say more.

1991. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 14, 1779.

I must be equitable; I must do the world justice; there are really some hopes of its amendment; I have not heard one lie these four days; but then, indeed, I have heard nothing. Well, then, why do you write? Stay, Madam; my letter is not got on horseback yet; nor shall it mount till it has something to carry. It is my duty, as your gazetteer, to furnish you with news, true or false, and you would certainly dismiss me if I did not, at least, tell you something that was impossible. The whole nation is content with hearing anything new, let it be ever so bad. Tell the first man you meet that Ireland has revolted; away he runs, and tells everybody he meets,—everybody tells everybody, and the next morning they ask for more news. Well, Jamaica is taken; oh! Jamaica is taken. Next day, what news? Why, Paul Jones is landed in Rutlandshire, and has carried off the Duchess of Devonshire, and a squadron is fitting out to prevent it; and I am to have a pension for having given the earliest intelligence; and there is to be a new farce called the *Rutlandshire Invasion*, and the King and Queen will come to town to see it, and the Prince of Wales will not, because he is not old enough to understand pantomimes.

Well, Madam; having dispatched the nation and its serious affairs, one may chat over private matters. I have seen Lord Macartney, and do affirm that he is shrunk, and has a *soupçon* of black that was not wont to reside in his

complexion. George[1] is so engrossed by the Board of Trade, that I have seen him but the morning after his arrival.

Mr. Beauclerk has built a library in Great Russell Street that reaches half-way to Highgate. Everybody goes to see it; it has put the Museum's nose quite out of joint.

Now I return to politics. Sir Ralph Payne and Dr. Johnson are answering General Burgoyne, and they say the words are to be so long that the reply must be printed in a pamphlet as large as an atlas, but in an Elzevir type, or the first sentence would fill twenty pages in octavo. You may depend upon the truth of it, for Mr. Cumberland told it in confidence to one with whom he is not at all acquainted, who told it to one whom I never saw; so you see, Madam, there is no questioning the authority.

I will not answer so positively for what I am going to tell you, as I had it only from the person himself. The Duke of Gloucester was at Bath with the Margrave of Anspach. Lord Nugent came up and would talk to the Duke, and then asked if he might take the liberty of inviting his Royal Highness to dinner? I think you will admire the quickness and propriety of the answer:—the Duke replied, 'My Lord, I make no acquaintance but in London,' where you know, Madam, he only has levees. The Irishman continued to talk to him even after that rebuff. He certainly hoped to have been very artful—to have made court there, and yet not have offended anywhere else by not going in town, which would have been a gross affront to the Duke had he accepted the invitation.

I was at Blackheath[2] t'other morning, where I was grieved. There are eleven Vander Werffs that cost an

LETTER 1991.—[1] George Selwyn.

[2] At Wricklemarsh (also written Ricklemarsh), apparently at this time occupied by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. Sir Gregory Page, second Baronet, the former owner of the estate, died in 1775.

immense sum: half of them are spoiled since Sir Gregory Page's death by servants neglecting to shut out the sun. There is another room hung with the history of Cupid and Psyche, in twelve small pictures by Luca Giordano, that are sweet. There is, too, a glorious Claude, some fine Teniers, a noble Rubens and Snyders, two beautiful Philippo Lauras, and a few more,—and several very bad. The house is magnificent, but wounded me; it was built on the model of Houghton, except that three rooms are thrown into a gallery.

Now I have tapped the chapter of pictures, you must go and see Zoffani's 'Tribune at Florence,' which is an astonishing piece of work, with a vast deal of merit.

There too you will see a delightful piece of Wilkes looking—no, squinting tenderly at his daughter. It is a caricature of the devil acknowledging Miss Sin in Milton. I do not know why, but they are under a palm-tree, which has not grown in a free country for some centuries.

15th.

With all my pretences there is no more veracity in me than in a Scotch runner for the ministry. Here must I send away my letter without a word in it worth a straw. All the good news I know is, that the devil of a winter is come in that will send armies and navies to bed, and one may stir out in November without fear of being tanned. I am heartily glad that we shall keep Jamaica and the East Indies another year, that one may have time to lay in a stock of tea and sugar for the rest of one's days. I think only of the necessaries of life, and do not care a rush for gold and diamonds, and the pleasure of stealing logwood. The friends of government, who have thought of nothing but of reducing us to our islandhood, and bringing us back to the simplicity of ancient times, when we were the frugal, temperate, virtuous old English, ask how we did before tea

and sugar were known. Better, no doubt; but as I did not happen to be born two or three hundred years ago, I cannot recollect precisely whether diluted acorns and barley bread, spread with honey, made a very luxurious breakfast.

I was last night at Lady Lucan's to hear the Misses Bingham sing Jomelli's 'Miserere,' set for two voices. There were only the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Bute, Mrs. Walsingham[3], the Brudenels, Keenes, Lord Macartney, George Selwyn, Mr. Jerningham, and half a dozen Irish. The service lasted near three hours, and was so dull, instead of pathetic, that I was rejoiced that the worst *was over, and the two women had left the sepulchre.* The Duchess told me that a habit-maker returned from Ampthill is gone stark in love with Lady Ossory, on fitting her with the new dress. I think they call it a Levite, and says he never saw so glorious a figure—I know that; and so you would be in a hop-sack, Madam—but where the deuce is the grace in a man's nightgown bound round with a belt?

Good night, Lady! I hope I shall have something to tell you in my next, that my letter may be shorter.

1992. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Codicil to my to-day's: viz. Nov. 15, 1779.

I enclosed the above to Lord Ossory, because it was not worth sixpence, and had sent it to the post, and then went to Bedford House, where, lo! enters Lady Shelburne, looking as fresh and ripe as Pomona. N.B. Her windows were not open yesterday, and to-day there was such a mist, ermined with snow, that I could not see. I find it was not

[3] Charlotte, second daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, K.B.; m. (1759) Hon. Robert Boyle-Walsingham, fifth son of first Earl of Shannon.

a habit-maker that was smitten with your Ladyship as a pig in a poke, but somebody else; but as her Grace's mouth has lost one tooth, and my ear, I suspect, another, I have not found out who the unfortunate man is.

Next enters your Ladyship's letter. I have seen my dignity of minister to Spain—many a fair castle have I erected in that country, but truly never resided there. Voltaire's *Dom Pèdre* is a poor performance indeed!

Mr. Cartwright, who, I humbly apprehend, is Mr. Carteret[1], is, I also apprehend, no better informed than his elder brother. So far from being gone to Cadiz, the French fleet, I believe, is gone to the hospital. Mr. Conway is not come[2]; I trust from the obstinacy of a contrary wind. It blustered violently on Saturday night, and made me very uneasy; but I think it was a wind full in his teeth. I have expected him for this fortnight—three days before the frigate sailed. This is long enough for a codicil, in which one has nothing more to give.

1993. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1779.

Mr. Stonhewer wrote to you on business and could not get an answer, and was seriously alarmed that you was ill. I did not know whither to direct till you told me yesterday that you are hoarding a reversion of holidays at York; not very agreeable to me, who do not reckon on what is to accumulate; but, in short, it is well you please me so much, for you often provoke me; so you do in translating Fresnoy[1].

Letter 1992.—[1] Hon. Henry Frederick Thynne Carteret (d. 1826), of Hawnes, Bedfordshire, second son of second Viscount Weymouth. He succeeded to some of the property of his grandfather, John Carteret, Earl Granville. He took the name of Carteret in 1776, and was created Baron Carteret of Hawnes in 1784. His elder brother was Viscount Weymouth, who was at this time about to resign his post as Secretary of State.

[2] From Jersey.

Letter 1993.—[1] A Latin poem by Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy (1611–1665), entitled *De Arte Graphica*.

I do not care whether I shall like it or not; you will no doubt improve a middling poem, and what then? you will not insert a thousand new lights and ideas, that you would have conceived if you had written a new poem on painting, which you understand better than Fresnoy. A mighty merit it would have been in Raphael, after 'The Transfiguration' (pray mind that word) to have copied Giotto! You are original, and I will like none of your copies. I do feel for the adulteration of your parsonage: it is monstrously unpleasant to have one's house tumbled and dirtied by strangers —and yet I do not see how you could refuse[2].

What can I tell you of news and politics? just now we are arrived at a moment of *grim repose*[3]. The combined fleets have not come forth—I imagine from much sickness and mortality. Sir Charles Hardy is crowing upon what may very properly be called his own dunghill. Though the French have given us many sound blows, they have certainly not come half up to their boasting and possibilities; yet it is likely that they will wind up the campaign with the capture of New York and Arbuthnot's fleet, which will make our obstinacy for the recovery of America still more heroic. Firmness retires where practicability finishes, and then obstinacy undertakes the business.

Ireland, I believe, will be brought to the same consistence, not with so much system and intention of driving it into rebellion, but—however, we have so many data to go upon, that there would be no great honour in foretelling misfortunes.

There is another, and as yet little cloud about the sun, that may join and make other tempests come to explosion.

[2] Mason had lent his house at Aston to Lady Conyers, daughter of his late patron, the Earl of Holdernesse.

[3] 'Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.'
The Bard, ii. 2.

Lord Gower has declared for resignation; Lord Weymouth wavers. I believe they have touched at many ports: I should be glad to see them shut out everywhere; whoever is betrayed and deserted by them has at least the merit of not being a traitor and running away. Distress and dissatisfaction do begin to murmur everywhere. Men do perceive that they cannot live upon loyalty and dissipation. General Burgoyne flatters himself that everybody will forget their own sorrows to be occupied with his. I will allow Lord Gower and Lord Weymouth to be mightily touched for him, but beg to be excused myself. I cannot forget how ready he was to be a great favourite.

I have very lately heard an account of the eruption of Vesuvius, and one part that was quite new to me. The people rose and were on the point of burning the theatre where the King was at the Opera—enraged at his insensibility.

Thank you for your prayer[4] and your excellent account of Lord Carmarthen's review and ball[5].

1994. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. I don't know what day.

If you can be content with anything but news as fresh as mackerel, I will tell you as pretty a story as a gentleman can hear in a winter's day, though it has not a grain of novelty in it but to those who never heard it, which was my case till yesterday.

[4] 'I congratulate you on your removal to Berkeley Square. May you enjoy the comforts of your new situation as long as the Phidian work, which is placed in the centre of that square, continues to be its chief ornament.' (Mason to Walpole, Nov. 12, 1779.) Mason alludes to a statue of George III which formerly stood in the centre of the square.

[5] 'My Lord Carmarthen called upon me the other day in his return from the East Riding of this great county, where he had reviewed the whole coast, and found it so totally defenceless that he had given a ball at Beverley on the occasion.' (Mason to Walpole, Nov. 12, 1779.)

When that philosophic tyrant the Czarina (who murdered two emperors for the good of their people, to the edification of Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert) proposed to give a code of laws that should serve all her subjects as much or as little as she pleased, she ordered her various states to send deputies who should specify their respective wants. Amongst the rest came a representative of the Samoieds: he waited on the marshal of the diet of legislation, who was Archbishop of Novogrod. 'I am come,' said the savage, 'but I do not know for what.'—'My clement mistress,' said his Grace, 'means to give a body of laws to all her dominions.'—'Whatever laws the Empress shall give us,' said the Samoied, 'we shall obey, but we want no laws.'—'How,' said the prelate, 'not want laws! why, you are men like the rest of the world, and must have the same passions, and consequently must murder, cheat, steal, rob, plunder,' &c., &c., &c.

'It is true,' said the savage, 'we have now and then a bad person among us, but he is sufficiently punished by being shut out of all society.'

If you love nature in its *naturalibus*, you will like this tale. I think one might make a pretty *Spectator* by inverting the hint: I would propose a general jail delivery, not only from all prisons, but madhouses, as not sufficiently ample for a quarter of the patients and candidates; and to save trouble, and yet make as impartial distinction, to confine the virtuous and the few that are in their senses. But I am digressing, and have not yet told you the story I intended; at least, only the first part.

One day Count Orlow, the Czarina's accomplice in more ways than one, exhibited himself to the Samoied in the robes of the order, and refulgent with diamonds. The savage surveyed him attentively, but silently. 'May I ask,' said the favourite, 'what it is you admire?'—'Nothing,'

replied the Tartar: 'I was thinking how ridiculous you are.'—'Ridiculous,' cried Orlow, angrily; 'and pray in what?'—'Why, you shave your beard to look young, and powder your hair to look old!'

Well! as you like my stories, I will tell you a third, but it is prodigiously old, yet it is the only new trait that I have found in that ocean *Bibliothèque des Romans*, which I had almost abandoned; for I am out of patience with novels and sermons, that have nothing new, when the authors may say what they will without contradiction.

My history is a romance of the amours of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of our Henry the Second. She is in love with somebody who is in love with somebody else. She puts both in prison. The Count falls dangerously ill, and sends for the Queen's physician. Eleanor hears it, calls for the physician, and gives him a bowl, which she orders him to prescribe to the Count. The doctor hesitates, doubts, begs to know the ingredients,—'Come,' says her Majesty, 'your suspicions are just—it is poison; but remember, it is a crime I want from you, not a lecture, go and obey my orders: my captain of the guard and two soldiers shall accompany you, and see that you execute my command, and give no hint of my secret; go, I will have no reply:' the physician submits, finds the prisoner in bed, his mistress sitting by. The doctor feels his pulse, produces the bowl, sighs, and says, 'My dear friend, I cannot cure your disorder, but I have a remedy here for myself,' and swallows the poison.

Is not this entirely new? it would be a fine *coup de théâtre*, and yet would not do for a tragedy, for the physician would become the hero of the piece, would efface the lovers; and yet the rest of the play could not be made to turn on him.

As all this will serve for a letter at any time, I will keep

the rest of my paper for something that will not bear postponing.

20th.

Come, my letter shall go, though with only one new paragraph. Lord Weymouth has resigned, as well as Lord Gower. I believe that little faction flattered themselves that their separation would blow up Lord North, and yet I am persuaded that sheer cowardice has most share in Weymouth's part. There is such universal dissatisfaction, that when the crack is begun, the whole edifice perhaps may tumble, but where is the architect that can repair a single story? The nation stayed till everything was desperate before it would allow that a single tile was blown off.

1995. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1779.

You ought not to accuse yourself only, when I have been as silent as you. Surely we have been friends too long to admit ceremony as a go-between. I have thought of writing to you several times, but found I had nothing worth telling you. I am rejoiced to hear your health has been better. Mine has been worse the whole summer and autumn than ever it was without any positive distemper, and thence I conclude it is a failure in my constitution—of which, being a thing of course, we will say no more. Nobody but a physician is bound to hear what he cannot cure—and if we will pay for what we cannot expect, it is our own fault.

I have seen Dr. Lort, who seems pleased with becoming a limb of Canterbury[1]. I heartily wish the mitre may not devolve before it has beamed substantially on him. In the

Letter 1995. — [1] He had been appointed private chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

meantime he will be delighted with ransacking the library at Lambeth; and to do him justice, his ardour is literary, not interested.

I am much obliged to you, dear Sir, for taking the trouble of transcribing Mr. Tyson's journal, which is entertaining. But I am so ignorant as not to know where Hatfield Priory is[2]. The three heads I remember on the gate at Whitehall; there were five more. The whole demolished structure was transported to the Great Park at Windsor by the late Duke of Cumberland, who intended to re-edify it, but never did; and now I suppose

Its ruins ruined, as its place no more[3]!

I did not know what was become of the heads, and am glad any are preserved. I should doubt their being the works of Torreggiano.

Pray who is Mr. Nichols[4], who has published the *Alien Priories*? There are half a dozen or more very pretty views of French cathedrals. I cannot say that I found anything else in the book that amused me—but as you deal more in ancient lore than I do, perhaps you might be better pleased.

I am told there is a new *History of Gloucestershire*, very large, but ill executed, by one Rudhall[5]. Still I have sent for it, for Gloucestershire is a very historic county.

It was a wrong scent on which I employed you. The arms I have impaled with Hobart are certainly not Boleyn's.

You lament removal of friends—alas! dear Sir, when one lives to our age, one feels that in a higher degree than from their change of place!—but one must not dilate those common moralities. You see by my date that I have

[2] The Priory church of Hatfield Peverell, near Witham, in Essex.

[3] 'Their ruins perish'd and their place no more.'—Pope, *Moral Essays*, v. 22.

[4] John Nichols (1745–1826), the printer and author.

[5] The name of the author was Samuel Rudder (d. 1801).

changed place myself. I am got into an excellent, comfortable, cheerful house; and as, from necessity and inclination, I live much more at home than I used to do, it is very agreeable to be so pleasantly lodged, and to be in a warm inn as one passes through the last vale. Adieu!

Yours ever,
H. W.

1996. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 21, 1779.

I am sorry, Madam, to inform you, if you have not heard it, that the troubles in Ireland ripen. An express came yesterday that the independent army had invested the House of Commons, and forced the members to take an oath of voting for free trade and a short money bill. The mob, too, *palliser'd*[1] the houses of the Attorney-General Scott[2] and Sir Henry Cavendish[3], who had ventured to plead a little for the English government. This is all I know yet, for I have been confined again these three days with the gout in my foot, and was not out of bed to-day till three o'clock.

Lord Weymouth has resigned, and quits his *bureau* to-morrow. This, I suppose, was what your Ladyship meant by saying you heard the *sheath was absolutely thrown away*; if it is, I believe Lord Weymouth will run after it, for I think the sword will never be his weapon.

Nor can I admire any, who, after doing all the mischief

Letter 1996.—[1] The London mob gutted Admiral Palliser's house, after the acquittal of Admiral Keppel. (See letter to Mann of Feb. 11, 1779.)

[2] John Scott (1739–1798), afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland; cr. May 20, 1784, Baron Earlsfort of Lisson Earl; Viscount Clonmell, 1789; Earl of Clonmell, 1793.

[3] Sir Henry Cavendish (1732–1804), second Baronet, of Doveridge Hall, Derbyshire, the well-known reporter of Parliamentary debates. He was at this time Receiver-General for Ireland.

they could, cry out 'Fire!' That they will go to extremities I do not doubt—what principle should restrain them?

A few answers to your last and I have done, for I am a little in pain. I have not seen the prologue and epilogue to *The Critic*[4], but am now very impatient, for I hear they are Mr. Fitzpatrick's, and will answer I shall admire them. If your Ladyship has copies, I beg you will let them be transcribed and sent to me incontinently.

The story you have heard of a royal amour, I fancy, was founded on a letter that has made much noise, and was delivered by mistake to a wrong person. The circumstances are too numerous for a letter, and were only the gossiping of two girls, who did not expect to have their correspondence rehearsed to the Ladies of the Bedchamber.

La Signorina[5] I have not seen, and, in truth, did not ask to see her. I love David[6] too well not to be peevish at an Abishag of eight years old.

Should I hear anything before to-morrow night, it shall make a P.S., but I wrote to-day lest I should not be able to-morrow.

22nd, from my bed.

P.S. I have had a bad night, though I expected a most tranquil one, for, about eight in the evening, as Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Damer were sitting with me, the door opened and entered General Conway. As the wind had been violent, I was comforting myself that it was contrary; but he had landed at Portsmouth the night before, after being blown to Plymouth. After his servants and baggage were embarked, the frigate was very near being lost.

I have seen nobody but him to-day, so cannot tell any more news.

[4] The prologue only to *The Critic* was written by Mr. Fitzpatrick.
[5] Maria Fagniani. [6] George Selwyn.

1997. To Richard Stonhewer (?).

Nov. 27, 1779.

I am extremely obliged to you, Sir, for the perusal of what you sent me[1]. It is so very interesting to *me*, that I am afraid to peruse it as much as it deserves, lest that interest should have fascinated my eyes. And yet, though it must touch me more than it will indifferent readers, the wit in Mr. Gray's letters, and the tender friendship between him and our amiable West, and the extraordinary abilities of both at so green an age, displayed to the fairest advantage by Mr. Mason's singular address, must I think charm everybody that has feeling or taste. I do not regret the insignificant figure I make myself. I never had any pretensions to parts like theirs, and I cheerfully consented to sacrifice myself to do honour to two dead friends that I valued so much.

Your obedient servant,
Hor. Walpole.

1998. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 28, 1779.

I did not forget you on the Parliament meeting, though you have not received proof of my recollection. Being ill in bed, and not able to write myself, I dictated a line to your nephew, to beg that, if anything very particular should happen on Thursday, the first day of the session, he would write to you the next day, which would have been my post-night. Your nephew was not in town, nor was expected

Letter 1997.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Maggs Bros., Strand, W.C.

[1] Horace Walpole perhaps alludes here to an edition of Mason's *Life of Gray*, published at York in 1778.

till to-day; and, having the gout in both feet and knees, I continued in too much pain to write myself, or even to dictate: besides that, in that situation, I had learnt few or no circumstances of the debate, except that little or no fluctuation had happened in the quintessence of debates—numbers on the division. I remember a man of humour proposing that, for the convenience of the greater part, the division should always precede the debate; that only they who liked to talk should stay and make their speeches, which he supposed never determined or altered the several votes: no compliment to oratory, and still less a panegyric on corruption and prejudice!

In fact, a very considerable defalcation from the standing majority had been expected. The inglorious and unprosperous events of the summer; the general discontent and dissatisfaction that are arisen; but, above all, the crack that has happened in the administration itself by the resignations of Lord Gower and Lord Weymouth, which at least implied apprehension in them that the edifice was falling, and which, being timed at the very eve of Parliament, were certainly not intended to prop it; and it having been as artfully divulged, that endeavours had been made to terrify Lord North from his post, by assuring him he could not maintain it: such a concurrence of untoward circumstances naturally suggested a vision of much diminution of the majority; and such a vision naturally is apt to realize it, by the caution of such prudent senators as love to proceed on sure grounds, and absent themselves till the prospect is more clear.

Lord North, however, had courage to stand the issue of a battle; his troops were better disciplined than had been expected, and the Lords Gower and Weymouth found that nobody had been frightened but themselves. What the latter feared, no mortal can guess; for he is actually run

away to Longleate, and no persuasions could retain him. The deserted would not impeach him for what they had co-operated in; and, if beaten, the victorious would have spared him for the merit of having opened a gate to their success.—But enough of such a recreant!

The other deserter has not yet gone over to the enemy. He will wait, no doubt, till some new fact leads him to thinking it much more heinous than all that is past. In the meantime, to console themselves for the little mischief their flight has occasioned, their small squadron of friends affect to impute the bulk of the majority, on Thursday last, to the intemperance of the amendment proposed by the opposition to the Address. The vacancies are supplied by Lord Bathurst as President, and by Lord Hillsborough as Secretary of State. You must not expect, however, that the storm is quite dispersed. Disappointment is no composer to some minds.

Fortune has shown us some partiality. D'Estaing's fleet of twenty-two ships has been dispersed, and probably suffered considerably, by a terrible tempest that lasted for three days off Carolina. Thus, the West Indies are likely to be saved. The danger is, that this favourable event may reinvigorate our impracticable frenzy of reconquering America; the most certain way of our not recovering it. Ireland is in great danger, if we apply our American ideas to it; but, alas! experience and misfortune have not yet operated as medicines!

That old meteor, Wilkes, has again risen above the horizon, when he had long seemed virtually extinct. The citizens, revolted from the court on the late disgraces, have voted him into the post of Chamberlain of London, a place of fifteen hundred pounds a year. How Massaniello and Rienzi and Jack Cade would stare at seeing him sit down as comfortably as an alderman of London!—If he should die of a surfeit of custard at last!

I had forgotten *myself*; but you see I am much better to-day. My pains are gone off, and I rose to-day at noon, after keeping my bed three days. Sufferings have taught me to estimate their absence at the rate of health and happiness.

Thank you for the poem to Mrs. Montagu on Shakespeare, which your nephew brought me. I do not admire the poetry, though in Italian, which methinks it is difficult to prevent from sounding poetical; but I like much the author's just attack on Voltaire for having pillaged Shakespeare, at whom he died railing.

29th.

If one meteor is re-illuminated, another is extinct. Lord Lyttelton is dead suddenly. *Suddenly* in this country is always at first construed to mean *by a pistol.* But it is not known yet whether Mars or Venus supplied the ammunition; and I may not be very accurate in dates, though they lie within the compass of three days. He had on Thursday made a violent speech against the administration, under which he held the post of Justice in Eyre; but this was not new: he was apt to go point-blank into all extremes without any parenthesis or decency, nor ever boggled at contradicting his own words. The story given out is, that he looked ill, and had said he should not live three days; that, however, he had gone to his house at Epsom that night, or next day, with a caravan of nymphs; and on Saturday night had retired before supper to take rhubarb, returned, supped heartily, went into the next room again, and died in an instant. I should have said more perhaps on Lord Lyttelton, but was interrupted, and told a fresh event that will stifle the other. Charles Fox has been slightly wounded in the side this morning in a duel. Adam, a Scot, and nephew of the architect's, a man of a very suspicious character, has for two or three years distinguished himself by absurd speeches,

—often, though a Scot, pointed against Lord North: but on Thursday last he uttered a most ridiculous one, in which he said that, though he had left the House last year prepossessed *against* administration, yet he had been converted *to* them by reading the examinations of the generals; who, he perceived, had been more to blame than the ministers. This rhapsody Fox had ridiculed in the highest degree with infinite wit and argument. Adam felt the sarcasm to the quick, and after the debate asked an explanation. Fox told him he had meant no personal invective, and they parted. At three this morning Adam sent an officer to Fox, to say he had read a very injurious detail of the affair in the newspapers, and desired Fox to contradict it. He wrote an answer, saying he was not answerable for newspapers; but assured him, under his hand, that he had meant nothing injurious, and Adam might show that reply. Not content, Adam returned that his *friends* were not satisfied, and that Mr. Fox must print the letter. 'That is too much,' said Fox; and at eight this morning they went into Hyde Park. Adam fired first, and the ball grazed Fox's side slightly; but he fired, and then said, 'Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?' You will feel horror at the reply. 'No,' said Adam, 'you must print your letter.' Still, 'No,' said Fox. Adam fired again, and missed; and then Fox fired in the air, and it ended.

P.S. As my letter was sealing, to which my paper would not let me make any conclusion, I received yours of the 13th; to which, being just got into bed, I cannot reply now. All I will say is, that great part of your news is true; many of the Spanish vessels are returned home; D'Estaing's fleet is dispersed; I know nothing of Martinico and their Domingomen.—Your nephew was with me this morning: I rejoice in what you tell me of his views.

1999. To Earl Harcourt.

Excuse me, my dear Lord, from not writing with my own hand; but I am just got into bed with a little return of pain.

I hate to avoid any opportunity of being good-natured, but when your Lordship puts the question to me, I must speak truth. I do know Mr. Hammond, for I was at school with him. I know that he is a gentleman and has children, and that he had a very good estate at Teddington, which his extravagance obliged him to sell above twenty years ago. He has existed since by genteel begging of all his contemporaries and schoolfellows, whom he wore out, and he is now, I suppose, taking a new lease of the generosity of their grandchildren. In short, my dear Lord, I can say no good of him; and if your Lordship will be so noble as to send him a guinea or two, and tell him it is upon condition that he never troubles you any more, it will be beyond what he has any reason to expect.

I am grieved to hear your Lordship is out of order, and do hope you will not stir out till you are quite recovered. You will do more service to any part of your country that deserves it by taking care of yourself, than you could do even if you were a member of the Convocation, by sitting amongst them.

Your Lordship's
Most faithful humble servant,
H. W.

Letter 1999.—Wrongly placed by C. amongst letters of Sept. 1779. (See *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 5, 1900.)

2000. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

Though you command, Madam, it would be impertinent and ridiculous to talk of myself, when at the same time the post will bring you Lord Ossory's account of Mr. Fox's duel. Could such an old story as the gout expect to fill a cranny of your attention at such a moment? Would not you hate anybody or letter that could not answer fifty questions you want to ask in a breath? I would answer them beforehand if I were not just got into bed with a little return of pain. Oh, and Lord Lyttelton—in about three hours your Ladyship will want to know all about him too. Would I could satisfy you, but just now I am not able, and therefore, after thanking you a thousand times, I must bid myself good night, and will answer your letter as soon as it is in my power.

2001. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

I desired Mr. Stonhewer on Saturday to write to you, and to tell you why I could not. From him or from the newspapers, who know everything as well and as soon as anybody, you will have learnt that the edifice of the majority does not, like the chief temple of the Philistines, rest on two slight pillars, which being removed, the whole fabric fell to pieces, but when pilasters take themselves for buttresses, no wonder they are mistaken. Such has been the fate of the Lords Gower and Weymouth, and I wish everybody saw them in as contemptible a light as I do. The last has attempted to avoid no degree of shame, for he is actually run away to Longleat. However, they do not give up the game, but have a matadore still to play a *black ace.*

So you think that we are still living on Thursday's debate and division! You are extremely mistaken, good Sir; we have fresh events every morning, not revolutions indeed, nor sea-fights, nor rebellions—all in good time. But we can furnish you every day with occurrences so strange and unexpected, that you folks in the country would live on a single one for three months. Come, what do you like? what do you choose? Is not a sudden death very comfortable in a long winter's evening over a sea-coal fire? or is a duel more to your taste? What young profligate would you wish hurried out of the world in an instant—I mean only as a beautiful flower that would close a sermon delicately, that you are composing on the debaucheries and gaming of the age? Would not there be still more dignity in it, if he were a young peer? or shall he be a fashionable orator? or a grave judge—or shall he be all three? You are a little difficult, Mr. Mason, and yet in these times much may be done to serve a friend. Or what think you of a single combat seasoned with a little spice of premeditated assassination *à la* Sam Martin[1], which pray observe does not signify Saint Martin.

Well, then, I will try to please you if I can. Know then that on Saturday night one of his Majesty's Chief Justices in Eyre, after having vented a warm philippic on Thursday *against* the administration, and after having retired to his house at Epsom on Friday, attended only by four virgins, whom he had picked up in the Strand, and after having supped plentifully on the said Saturday on fish and venison, finding himself indisposed, went to bed, rung his bell in ten minutes, and in one minute after the arrival of his servant, expired! But what signifies sudden death without forewarning? He had said on Thursday that he should die

Letter 2001.—[1] Samuel Martin practised at a target before challenging Wilkes.

in three days, had dreamt so and felt it would be so: on Saturday he said, 'If I outlive to-day I shall go on;'—but enough of him. My next event is worth ten of this.

As Lord Lyttelton had spoken *against* the ministers, Mr. Adam, nephew of the architects, spoke *for* them. It is supposed that whenever Scotland was dissatisfied with, pooh! I mean, not satisfied by, Lord North, Adam was delegated to run at him; and now and then might have a plenary indulgence from the Pope for talking the language of opposition, in order to worm out secrets—poor souls! as if they had any.

Well, on Thursday he made a most absurd speech in favour of the court, which Charles Fox tore piecemeal with infinite humour and argument, which tortured the patient so much that next day he asked an explanation. Fox assured him he had meant nothing personal, but had a right to dislocate his arguments, and he was satisfied; but on Sunday he sent a Scotch major to Fox to complain of the state of the debate in the newspapers, and to desire Mr. Fox would contradict and declare his good opinion of him. Fox returned for answer, that he was not responsible for accounts in newspapers; that it was harder still if on their misrepresentation he must give a good character of any man they abused: he again declared he had intended no offence, and that Mr. Adam was welcome to show that declaration to anybody. After consult had, Adam returned that Mr. Fox must print that recantation. 'Hold!' said Fox, 'not so far neither.'—Oh, I forgot the principal circumstance of all: Adam added that his *friends* would not be satisfied under less than publication. At eight this morning they went into Hyde Park, Fox with Fitzpatrick, Adam with his Major Humberston for seconds. Adam fired, and the ball wounded Charles Fox's side, though very slightly: he then fired, missed, and said, 'Now, Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?'

Near as you are to the Tweed you will not guess the reply. 'No,' said Adam; 'you must still print your letter.' Nothing could be more unjust, more unfair. They had fought because Fox would *not* consent to that pretension. Fox with the same firmness and temper with which he had conducted himself through the whole affair peremptorily refused, and the bloodhound again fired, but missed, and then Fox fired into the air and it ended.

An odd circumstance larded this history. Humberston was waiting for him at Fox's house, and so was Sheridan: when Charles was come home and had dispatched the bravo, Sheridan said, 'Pray who is that ill-looking fellow? he looks like the carrier of a challenge.'

Well, I am sure I have made amends for having been punished by the gout, and here too have I been writing in bed till eleven at night, but thank you I am better and was in the other room from twelve till six to-day, when my pains returned; yet finding them easier at nine, I was eager to be the first to tell you two such strange events. Half the town have been reading the latter correspondence in Charles Fox's room the whole morning, and I received it piping hot, except that I have abridged it a little, from a very accurate reporter. Adieu, or the bellman will be gone[2].

2002. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Thursday evening, Dec. 2, 1779.

Your Ladyship must excuse another short answer to the letter I have this moment received, for I am extremely weak and low, the consequence always of the fever going off. My pains are gone everywhere but in my right arm

[2] Letters for late post were formerly collected by a bellman, who was a post-office official.

and hand, which last is uneasy enough; but then I sleep and doze exceedingly; a most fortunate faculty in one that is so long decaying.

I am vexed that Lord Ossory or your Ladyship should think it necessary to make an apology for his not calling on me before he went: I thought he called very often in so short a space; and I am always upon my guard not to let my tiresome illnesses torment others too. How should Lord Ossory, who comes but for a moment, and has a thousand friends, amusements, and politics, to drink at a draught, have time to come and sip my dregs of gout? Surely, surely, Mr. Fox's duel was sufficient to occupy him wholly for two days. Of all duels, on true or false record, this was the most perfect! So much temper, sense, propriety, easy good humour, and natural good nature, on a base of firmness and spirit, never were assembled. For Mr. Adam, I cannot describe him, as I never extracted malevolence out of the fogs of the Highlands.

Of poor Lady Jane[1], I own, I did not care to speak to your Ladyship, as I knew how you would lament her; nor can I tell you much now about her death or will. I think her low spirits began before Lady Blandford's death; yet that might increase them. They increased to the greatest degree, and at last she died of obstinately refusing nourishment. The *Greenwich*[2] did pretend to take care of her; I don't know whether she did, but I know she talked brutally about her. I have heard that Lady Jane has left her fortune to Lady Frances[3], but am not sure.

I have heard Mr. Tickell's poem read once, and thought the beginning very bad. The allusions are not at all just, but forced into the service by vile puns. Towards the end

LETTER 2002.—[1] Lady Jane Scott, daughter of the second Duke of Buccleuch.

[2] Lady Greenwich, sister-in-law of Lady Jane.

[3] Lady Frances Scott (afterwards Lady Douglas), Lady Jane's niece.

there seems some very pretty lines; but, upon the whole, *à quoi bon? à quel propos?* I believe it was meant for a satire, but the author winked, and it flashed in the pan.

I have not seen the prologue[4], Madam, but should seriously take it very kindly if you would send me a copy; indeed I want amusement.

I have not breath to dictate more, and must take my leave.

2003. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 6, 1779.

I return both poems, Madam, with the fidelity and gratitude which they, the author, and your Ladyship, deserve from me. The lines to 'Delia' are very poetic, dressed with all the genteel ease of Mr. Fitzpatrick. The prologue is charming; and a short, just, and compendious history of the English stage.

I am told my account of Lady Jane's will was wrong, and that she has left her original 10,000*l.* to the Duke of Buccleuch, and to Lady Frances only 250*l.* a year, Petersham[1], and 1,000*l.* in money; so the public had made a better will for her.

I lament not being able to be to-day where I seldom wish myself, in the House of Commons[2]; but if I opened the current of regrets they would soon swell to a torrent; and I had better bid your Ladyship good night, since I have nothing new to tell you.

[4] The prologue to *The Critic*, written by Richard Fitzpatrick.

Letter 2003.—[1] A house in Ham Walk, Richmond.

[2] On Dec. 6 Lord Ossory moved a resolution relative to the ministerial neglect of Irish affairs.

2004. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1779.

The very morning after I wrote to you last, the gout seized my right hand and still keeps possession, not that I have had anything particular to tell you; the papers are full of, and accurate enough in debates, and by them majorities are no whit affected. The two seceding Lords[1] made a very silly figure; one has seceded from his own secession and speech, and the other from his secession into the country. MacDonald, the former's son-in-law, has made as absurd, though not so black a figure as Adam. He abused Lord North in very gross, yet too applicable terms, and next day pleaded he had been drunk, recanted, and was all admiration and esteem for his Lordship's talents and virtues; so much for Parliament!

Lord Harcourt has told you a better anecdote than any of these: there is no improving upon it.

You bear the effects of the storm with great philosophy indeed. Some folks, I see, push old proverbs to both extremities and can touch nothing, but they bring a *new* house upon their heads. Old ones, however more solid, tumble too at a certain fatal touch. The removal of the south terrace at Windsor has endangered, ay, cracked that whole range of buildings, and the grantees of the lodgings have removed their goods and furniture lest all should be crushed.

I am glad you have tasted of Mr. Eden's[2] four plates of

Letter 2004.—[1] Lords Gower and Weymouth.

[2] William Eden (1744–1814), M.P. for Woodstock, third son of Sir Robert Eden, third Baronet, of Windlestone Hall, Durham; cr. (Nov. 18, 1789) Baron Auckland in Ireland; cr. (May 22, 1793) Baron Auckland of West Auckland in Durham. Lord of Trade, 1776; Commissioner to America, 1778; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1780–82; Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, 1783; Envoy to Versailles, 1785; Ambassador Extraordinary to Madrid, 1788; Ambassador at the Hague, 1790–93. The 'four plates of *blanc-manger*' were Eden's recently published *Four*

blanc-manger stewed with caraway comfits. Though they must have soon palled your stomach, never was such an insipid *entremets* dished up by a gentleman confectioner.

Mr. Tickell's hodge-podge of partridges[3] and House of Commons is as silly, though afterwards, here and there, there are eight or ten pretty lines. I have read Sheridan's *Critic*, but not having seen it, for they say it is admirably acted, it appeared wondrously flat and old, and a poor imitation; it makes me fear I shall not be so much charmed with *The School for Scandal* on reading, as I was when I saw it.

If you can send us any stories of ghosts out of the north, they will be very welcome—Lord Lyttelton's vision has revived the taste; though it seems a little odd that an apparition should despair of being able to get access to his Lordship's bed in the shape of a young woman, without being forced to use the disguise of a robin-redbreast.

If your county remonstrate, it will be met half-way by the south. They talk of a like rebuke from Hampshire, where there is already a sturdy opposition to the court candidate, as there is in Devonshire too. Ireland I fear is going much faster, but with what are not we threatened? yet perseverance in the American war is at this moment avowed! Is it possible to write on, when one has told you the excess of distraction?

2005. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, my dear Madam, my letters are useless; and, when I can only dictate, they are not only

Letters to the Earl of Carlisle, on the Spirit of Party, the War, Raising Supplies, and Free Trade with Ireland.

[3] Hitherto printed *partrides*—but apparently Tickell's *Epistle from Charles Fox to John Townshend.*

gênées and insipid, but force me to exert my faint voice more than I can afford. I am now trying to scratch out a few lines with my muffled hand; and the effort must be accepted in lieu of length. In fact, I am impatient to thank your Ladyship and Mr. Fitzpatrick for his intended offering to the armoury at Strawberry, where it shall be consecrated on the 4th of November, a more solemn holiday there than the 5th. I recollect a story of James I, who, being seized with the colic as he was hunting, stepped into a cottage, and complaining, the good woman of the house recommended a bullet to him to swallow, which she assured him had done wonders, and had often passed through her whole family. I will preserve Mr. Fitzpatrick's present carefully, that so *sovereign* a medicine may have a chance of returning whence it came; and, in case of need, of going through all the Scots that deserve it.

You know, Madam, I can give you no account of new beauties but what I hear: Miss Gore is much admired. Miss Lennox is said to be very well, but no more.

Lord Ossory's speech was thought very sensible and proper, and to have no fault but its brevity, which is never charged on speeches that are not liked. Hitherto all goes well for Ireland: I fervently hope the Irish will be as reasonable.

Recommend books to you, Madam!—why, the manufacture is lost both in England and France. I believe nothing will be printed soon but ship news; and Wilkes's and Temple Luttrell's speeches, which they print themselves.

If Lord Ossory is returned to-day, as I conclude, pray tell him, Madam, that I shall have a gallery of Dusseldorp[1] for him at the original rate of six guineas.

You see, Madam, there was no such miracle in Buckinger

LETTER 2005.—[1] *La Galerie Electorale de Dusseldorff, ou Catalogue raisonné et figuré de ses tableaux*, by Nicolas de Pigage (Bâle, 1778).

writing with his stump! I have some notion that all the limbs and members may serve as coadjutors to the others; but I will not surmise how far that may be carried, lest old folks like me should, as they are apt, attempt ridiculous experiments.

2006. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 20, 1779.

Since mine of the 30th of last month, I have not been able to write a line myself; nor can yet: the gout took and keeps possession of my right hand, and returned last week into the foot, knee, and wrist of the same side. I think it is again departing; but, like war, it makes many skirmishes after one thinks the campaign is over. Your nephew, I hope and believe, has written more than once in the interval; and, I suppose, given you a sketch of Parliamentary transactions, which, though warm enough, have produced no material event or alteration. The most important object of all even now in question has not received the least rub; and, which is better still, promises all appearance of being crowned with success. Great concessions to Ireland have been adopted, are sailing through both Houses with favourable gales, have been notified to Ireland, and have pleased there, and we trust will restore harmony between these islands. We have the sense to trespass on the formalities of Christmas, and for once prefer wisdom to going out of town the moment it is fashionable.

The holidays, however, are not without subjects of rejoicing; we have taken from Spain a sturdy fort on the Mosquito shore[1], two rich register ships, and prejudiced

Letter 2006.—[1] San Fernando de Omoa, taken on Oct. 17, 1779, by the English under Captain Dalrymple and Commodore Luttrell (afterwards Earl of Carhampton).

them still more by bringing off the provision of quicksilver for their mines, which the captors nobly refused to restore for the large offer of three hundred thousand pounds. The generous tars, too, have admitted their companions the landmen into a participation of the booty. One sailor shines brighter than all their constellation: one of the first to mount the scaling-ladder, he jumped on the platform with a sabre in each hand; but, finding there a Spaniard swordless, the Briton, with the air of a Paladin, tossed one of his weapons to him, and said, 'Now we are on equal terms!'

Having no more public events to tell you, I am sorry I must leap to a private story, in which there is far from being either bravery or gallantry, but which is savage enough to have been transmitted from the barbarians on the Mosquito shore, whether Indian or Spanish; for the latter, who had previously taken a fort from us, had acted a little in the style of their original exploits in America. Well! but my story comes only 'cross the Irish Channel. Lord C., a recent peer of that kingdom, and married to a great heiress there, a very amiable woman, had, however, a more favourite mistress. The nymph, like my Lord, was no mirror of constancy, but preferred a younger, handsomer swain. The peer, frantic with jealousy, discovered an assignation, and, hiring four bravoes, broke in upon the lovers; when, presenting a pistol to the head of his rival, he bade him make instant option of being shot, or reduced to the inability of giving any man jealousy. The poor young man was so ungallant as to prefer a chance for life on any terms. The brutal Lord ordered his four ruffians to seize the criminal, and with his own hand performed the bloody operation. The victim died the next day, the murderer escaped, but one of his accomplices is taken.

Dec. 21.

We seem to have made a little eruption back into the year 1759, for victories have arrived, for two days together. D'Estaing is defeated, and wounded in two places, at the siege of the Savannah in Georgia, and has lost fifteen hundred men; so says the extraordinary *Gazette*: but I must own there seems to be a great hiatus in the authority; for it comes from nobody concerned in the action, not even to those that sent it to us. Indeed, there is nothing contradictory that we have not believed about D'Estaing within these forty-eight hours: he himself, with four other ships and sixteen transports, was sworn to be at the bottom of the sea, by one that saw them there, or might have seen them there, as he was close by when they set out. Then he was landed in France; and then he was repulsed in Georgia; and then his whole fleet revives, and reassembles, and blocks up the port of the Savannah: and now he himself is indubitably at Paris, as letters thence last night positively affirm [2]. However, the Park and Tower guns firmly believe the *Gazette's* account, and huzza'd yesterday morning. I hope they were in the right, excepting on the entire existence of D'Estaing's squadron.

Well! you may hold up your head a little *vis-à-vis de Monsieur de Barbantan* [3]. If new triumphs do not pour in too fast, I hope to be able to write the next myself. At present I am party per pale, gout and health; but unluckily the former is on the dexter side, and makes it void.

[2] After his repulse at Savannah D'Estaing, with part of his fleet, returned to France, while the other part sailed for the West Indies.

[3] The French minister at Florence.

2007. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 23, 1779.

Alas, Madam, I am very unlikely to enjoy even a more agreeable prison at Ampthill: all my advancement is retrograde; again, I can neither walk nor write. The deluge, which your Ladyship calls mild weather, as I suppose Noah did the moment his pair of peacocks ceased croaking for more rain, has brought back my gout particularly into my right hand; and, as I had no reason to expect a return, I have still less for guessing when it will depart. Lord Bristol[1] died yesterday morning of the same distemper in his stomach: not three months ago he made a visit to the Duke and Duchess[2] at the Pavilions[3], and good-naturedly called on me on his return, to persuade me to leave off the use of the bootikins, and to recommend a system of applications, I forget what, that had done wonders for him. I rose and stamped hard with both feet on the marble, and said, 'This is what the bootikins do for me: your Lordship, though now free from the gout, has been brought into my room by two servants: I will not blame your Lordship's method, but can I exchange my own for it?' However, as Lord Bristol is delivered from the gout and I am not, it may be a moot point whether Martha or Mary has chosen the better part.

Lord Coventry and Colonel Hervey[4] are Lord Bristol's executors. He has left an estate of 800*l.* a year that he had purchased to Mrs. Nesbitt, for life, paying 300*l.* a year to his natural son by Mrs. Clarke (the Kitty Hunter), till of age, and 400*l.* afterwards, he to have the whole if surviving her;

Letter 2007.—[1] Augustus John Hervey, third Earl of Bristol.
[2] Of Gloucester.
[3] At Hampton Court.
[4] Colonel (afterwards General) Hon. William Hervey, a younger brother of Lord Bristol.

if not, she and Colonel Hervey to have the property of the whole. His personal estate, estimated at 30,000*l.*, Lord Bristol divides between Mrs. Nesbitt and the aforesaid son. I do not hear of another legacy, not even to his sisters. To Colonel Hervey he had in his life given their mother's house in St. James's Place.

I know no more of our new victories than your Ladyship reads in the newspapers and gazettes; nor can one add to the ridicule which the court itself has thrown on the business in Georgia, by firing guns, by efforts at illuminations, and by their method of retailing the intelligence by an anonymous letter, and by suppressing every syllable from General Prevost[5] himself, &c. They had better have stuck to their triumphs on the Mosquito shore, which were heroic and perfect in every light, and the narratives of which seem to me the clearest relations of any battle or siege I ever saw.

The prospect does seem to clear up happily in Ireland. Oh that we may come a little to our senses, and be softened into some wisdom by good fortune, as we have long been hardened in folly and obstinacy, by disappointment and disgrace!

You are to know, Madam, that I have in my custody the individual ebony cabinet in which Madame de Sévigné kept her pens and paper for writing her matchless letters. It was preserved near Grignan by an old man who mended her pens, and whose descendant gave it last year to Mr. Selwyn, as truly worthy of such a sacred relic. It wears, indeed, all the outward and visible signs of such venerable preciousness, for it is clumsy, cumbersome, and shattered, and inspires no more idea of her spirit and *légèreté*, than the mouldy thigh-bone of a saint does of the unction of his sermons.

[5] General Prevost was in command when D'Estaing was repulsed at Savannah.

I have full powers to have it repaired and decorated as shall seem good in my own eyes, though I had rather be authorized to enclose and conceal it in a shrine of gold and jewels, as princely bigots serve the skulls and shrivelled corpses of their patron saints.

Lord Macartney is gone to Ireland; and, as many others are dispersing themselves, my circles will be very thin, though I must depend upon them for some time, for last night and this morning I have had pretty sharp pain in my hand. At the beginning of this fit, your Ladyship commended my patience; alack! it is what I am reduced to engraft upon temperance, which did not avail me. If I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall acquire all the other virtues but the one which longevity makes a *sinecure*, and consequently requires no institution.

2008. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Christmas Day, 1779.

I suppose this will find you like a true reformer in the midst of anathemas and minced pies. I am sorry the great Barons who would not budge a foot while they had any dormant hopes of favour, are coming to put their sickle into the fruits of your plough. Mr. Fred Montagu was so obliging as to call on me and offer to carry any letter to you; but at that time I was not able to scratch out a line, as I do now, even with a swaddled hand, and in truth with so much difficulty that I could engrave as expeditiously. I have had a relapse, though a slight one, and called it only a *codicil* to my gout: Mr. Gibbon said very well, 'But I fancy it is not in consequence of your *will*.' Lord Bristol has outran me, and leaves an Earl-Bishop[1] and a Countess-Duchess. Have you seen in yesterday's *Public Advertiser* a good

Letter 2008.—[1] Lord Bristol's brother and successor was Bishop of Derry.

collection of applications to public characters from Tom Thumb, like those with which we were so pestered last year from Shakespeare? The last, on the bigamist Maid of Honour I have just mentioned, is one of the happiest quotations I ever saw:—

> A maid like me Heaven form'd at least for *two*;
> I married him—and now I'll marry you.

I find the graving-tool too laborious, and must quit it, and as I have given my secretary leave to go and keep his Christmas, this must be only a note, not that I had anything new to tell you if I could have continued.

Yours, &c.

2009. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 27, 1779.

I have two good reasons against writing, nothing to say, and a lame muffled hand; and *therefore* I choose to write to you, for it shows remembrance. For these six weeks almost I have been a prisoner with the gout, but begin to creep about my room. How have you borne the late deluge and the present frost? How do you like an Earl-Bishop? Had not we one before in ancient days[1]? I have not a book in town, but was not there an Anthony Beck, or a Hubert de Burgh, that was Bishop of Durham and Earl of Kent, or have I confounded them?

Have you seen Rudder's new *History of Gloucestershire*? His additions to Sir Robert Atkyns make it the most sensible history of a county that we have had yet; for his descriptions of the site, soil, products, and prospects of each

Letter 2009.—[1] Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, was also Earl of Kent. Of the persons mentioned by Walpole Hubert de Burgh was Earl of Kent, but not Bishop of Durham; Antony Bek was Bishop of Durham, but not Earl of Kent.

parish are extremely good and picturesque; and he treats fanciful prejudices, and Saxon etymologies, when unfounded, and vulgar traditions, with due contempt.

I will not spin this note any farther, but shall be glad of a line to tell me you are well. I have not seen Mr. Lort since he roosted under the metropolitan wings of his Grace of Lambeth.

Yours ever,
H. W.

2010. To Earl Harcourt.

My dear Lord, Friday night.

You have used me so much to your goodness, that I catch cold when I am long without feeling it. I have not had the honour of seeing you this age, and cannot yet *go* to see anything. My gout, I own, lasts long enough to wear out anybody's patience, and has reduced me to solitude; nor dare I complain, but to the very Good, for who else would mind me? But pray do not think that is my only reason for petitioning your Lordship:—

> Blest be the gout, for those it took away,
> And those it left me—if you are one of them!

However, do not be frightened; I trust that next week I shall be able to crawl about again; and then you will have as much reason to be alarmed with my gratitude; for I have already received obligations—ay! and presents enough, to be always

Your Lordship's
Most bounden servant,
Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2010.—Misplaced by C. among letters of Sept. 1779. (See *Notes and Queries*, July 7, 1900.)

2011. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1780.

I assure you, Madam, I have no affectation of philosophic indifference to life. I like to live whenever I am free from pain, or do not look forward—but I have so comfortless a prospect before me—if I have any prospect before me, that it is no counterfeit levity when I speak with coolness of a moment that may spare me many sufferings, and what I dread still more, helpless decrepitude. But you shall hear no more of thoughts that I confess ought not to pass my own bosom, and which Lord Bristol's death suggested. You are equally kind, Madam, in being affected at what I said, and in recommending Bath; but indeed I cannot listen to that advice. Bath is excellent for those who are *in travail* of the gout, and seek a fit as a composition for subsequent health, but I certainly have no occasion to accelerate the attacks. They are made without any declaration of war, and I find myself a prisoner, as happened six weeks ago, when I thought myself most secure of a truce by the short fit in September. In short, my dear lady, Bath might give me the gout, but cannot cure it. My management of myself is formed on the best observations I can make on my own constitution after long experience: I certainly have less quantity of pain, and have shorter fits than formerly: I recover the use of all my limbs tolerably in the intervals, and my spirits still more; and therefore, when I am reckoned deaf to all advice, it is not from obstinacy, but from never having known one, who, doomed to an incurable disorder, had better success; or who, though herculean to me, preserved his inside so strong, or his head and stomach so totally unattacked. I would not have said half so much, if gratitude for your Lady-

ship's singular goodness had not obliged me to give you a rational account, to compensate for the idleness of what you dignify by calling it wit and phrases; though my expressions are but the colours with which I would skin over the reflections that arise in long illnesses, and that will sometimes slip into the pen when they are floating on the mind.

I gladly congratulate your Ladyship and our Lord on the pacification of Ireland, which seems assured by the cordial reception given by both Houses there to the quieting bill. Their expressions are even pathetic and heroic; for instead of exulting on having extorted redress, they accept it with humility and gratitude. It now appears that that alarming struggle was fortunate: it has obtained what England ought to have conceded earlier, and what may enrich both countries; it leaves a sturdy army there, ready in the spirit of its hero of the Boyne to resist France or arbitrary power—a better guard than toleration of Papists to protect a Protestant constitution!

Methinks I am sorry, Madam, that you did not accept for me even with thanks, as I should have done myself, Lady Shelburne's condescension in apologizing for not answering my card, which was totally unnecessary: mine was a mere *how-d'ye*—sure she will not think me capable of having complained! I could be as peevishly ceremonious as your great viceroy, Lord Buckingham, who I see is grown popular, with Lord Hillsborough and Lord North—the same insects do not thrive in both countries.

Lord Bristol has left a paper, or narrative of the Lord knows what, that is to be padlocked till his son is of age—nine years hence; and then not to be published while *whom God long preserve* is alive. This was leaving the boy a fortune indeed, if both live nine years! There, too, is another noble author—not for me, but for a supplement.

I had rather the Earl-Bishop would publish his father's *Memoirs*[1].

Last year began with a hurricane: this commences with a fog as thick as butter—I hope, an omen of our adversity softening, as mists never blow down trees nor blow away islands, and may clear up. This is a new species of divination, and may be called *the comparative*; and as every man is partial to a system he invents, however nonsensical, you will take it as a compliment, I hope, Madam, if I wish you a happy new fog, and a thousand of them!

P.S. All my letter but on this page was written last night; the improvement of my hand is owing to having exchanged my bootikin for a glove—so the fog has been of service to me, and will consequently convince me of the reality of my discovery. Formerly the same prognostics foretold the downfall of the Turk and the cure of the toothache.

2012. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1780.

Well! Madam, I shall love a fog as long as I live; it is the best weather-glass in Christendom, and then I spell it so well! Nostradamus was a baby to me. Nay, I now understand that text, which I never comprehended before, *of seeing as in a glass darkly.* Here has Captain Fielding[1] brought in the whole Dutch fleet[2], with the life and soul,

Letter 2011.—[1] The celebrated *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, by John, Lord Hervey, first published in 1848.

Letter 2012.—[1] Captain Charles Fielding, a grandson of the fourth Earl of Denbigh.

[2] 'On the first day of the New Year, 1780, a Dutch fleet of merchant-ships proceeding to the Mediterranean, and convoyed by one of their admirals, Count Byland, fell in with an English squadron under Commodore Fielding. The Dutch commander refused to allow the pretensions of the English. He fired upon the boats which the Commodore sent to search his vessels; poured a

veins, arteries, blood and nerves of the squadron at Brest, which will now be a *caput mortuum*. The Dutch made no resistance; this is all I know yet, but that their Admiral is prisoner too. Now you expect a Dutch war—no such thing—at least you are a bad courtier if you conclude so. It is supposed that the French town of Amsterdam refused to pay taxes unless they might trade with France, but that the rulers of the Republic declared they would not *protect* such illicit trade; and some whispers, not very low, say that Sir Joseph Yorke[3] advised this capture, persuaded that Holland would not resent it. Such is the creed of the morning: I answer for nothing but being glad of the crippling of the French navy.

Here is another fresh piece of intelligence for which I do not love my friend the fog so much, though I believe it gives as much pleasure at St. James's. The back settlers in Carolina have risen, since Prevost's victory, to the amount of three thousand, have seized a town, and declared for the old government. Whatever contributes—and a straw will—to encourage the prosecution of that ruinous war, is very unpropitious.

Oh dear! I fear my fog was but a mist! The Dutch Admiral fired a broadside, but struck on Fielding's first gun, and is brought in with all—but what we wanted—naval stores. If this last state, and not the first, is the truth (for remember, Madam, I write as anybody passes by, and only stops to tell me something; and therefore warrant nothing), the ministers may have blundered us into another war; and then it will be they, and not I, that have seen in a glass darkly.

broadside into Fielding's own flagship; and then, finding the act of hostility returned, struck his colours. The greater part of the convoy made their escape; but seven sail, besides Count Byland's man-of-war, were carried to Spithead. It was found that they were laden with military stores for the use of the French and Spaniards.' (Stanhope, *History of England*, ed. 1854, vol. vii. p. 44.)

[3] Ambassador at the Hague.

Well! I shall not pique myself, Madam, on adjusting the more or less of this event, which will be discussed, contradicted, affirmed in every newspaper. My office is to dispatch away my letters with nine post-horns blowing before them on the first singularity. The truth or falsehood is to follow after at their leisure in the state coach, and Don Welbore Ellis may then hand them out in ceremony if he pleases. The pleasure of a letter in the country is hearing something unexpected that sets everybody to chattering, guessing, reasoning in the dark, and wanting to hear more—and that more, when it comes, is generally far short of the expectation; so you shall have no second parts from me.

My last intelligence was wrong; Lord Bristol's codicil, now printed, seems to relate entirely to his father's papers, to nothing of his own; nay, it seems rather civilly than rudely meant as to the hour of publication, and to prevent disagreeable truths appearing with regard to the late Prince of Wales.

2013. To the Rev. William Mason.

Jan. 4, 1780.

I always perceived a striking resemblance between you and Milton:—

I thought so once, but now I know it.

Why, you are an agitator, a sequestrator, and one of the committee of safety; one does not know to treat you with reverence enough. I would write to you with my hat off, if I ever put it on; and therefore could only do as my namesake uncle did, who being met walking near the Hague, by the Spanish Ambassador on a proud Isabella jennet, who descended to make a bow, the latter said he could not return the compliment unless Don Guzman would lend him his

horse, that he might mount, dismount, and make his obeisance. Poor Mr. Smelt! how one may hurt a man by serving him[1]! I like your committee's thanking the Barons for their appearance, which was a very civil way of marking the impertinence of their intrusion. They would have made a party affair of what was the result of feeling for the distresses and disgrace of the nation; but, alas! here is the nation plunged deeper still. Yesterday came an express from Captain Fielding, who has brought a Dutch fleet into Plymouth, and yet has missed his aim, which was to seize stores going to the Brest fleet essential to its re-equipment. Those requisites were masts and timber, instead of which he has only captured hemp and iron. Whether the more material articles have escaped, or have not yet ventured out, I do not know; nor do I relate the particulars of the rencounter, which I have heard variously related, and which seem to have consisted of ceremonious salutations by the mouths of cannon, rather than hostile attacks.

No sooner do we breathe in Ireland than we open a new tempest with Holland. Is it possible that we should not sink in this ocean of troubles! You who are so sanguine and spirited, have you any hopes of England rising again? I who have lately passed so many solitary hours of pain and reflection see no distant ray of recovery. In vain that selfish uncomfortable question occurs, 'What is it to thee, poor skeleton, what is the future fate of thy country? The churchyard at Houghton will not be narrower than it is.' Still the love of that country, of its liberty and prosperity, will be uppermost, and grief for its fall; and as there is little left for me, but to sit and think; but you are not in so despondent a mood, and you shall have no more of my meditations—I will change the theme. Some foolish friend,

LETTER 2013.—[1] Horace Walpole refers to Mason's account of a speech made by Mr. Smelt at a political meeting at York.

who, by the way, cannot measure a verse, has published some paltry poems of the last Lord Lyttelton, that appear genuine, and discover no parts, which I have long believed he had not. There is a prefatory defence of his character, the badness of which the officious editor comprises in the love of women and gaming, and which were virtues compared with his other faults.

My hand has written its dose, and must repose. I have not seen Lord Harcourt these ten days, so probably shall soon, for I do not yet go abroad. Do you mean to hatch all your eggs in the north, and have you abandoned your intention of coming to town?

2014. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 4, 1780.

I am going to write a short letter in quantity, but a very serious one in matter. A stroke has been struck that seems pregnant with another war—a war with Holland. Advice had been received of large supplies of naval stores being ready to sail for Brest, furnished by the warm friends of France, the Amsterdamers; stores essential to the re-equipment of the French navy, and as repugnant to the treaties subsisting between us and the States. These merchantmen proposed to take advantage of a convoy going to the Levant and other places, the States not countenancing that manœuvre. It was determined not to wink at such an outrage, but to hazard complaints or resentment, when such a blow could be given to the farther enterprises of our capital enemies. Captain Fielding, with five men-of-war of the line, was ordered to seize the whole counterband trade, and has executed what he could. He has brought into Plymouth eight merchantmen and three men-of-war, with their Admiral. The latter refused to allow a search; some

shot were exchanged, but in air, on both sides, and then the Dutchmen struck. Fielding desired him to rehoist his flag, but he refused, and said he must accompany his convoy; thus creating himself a prisoner.

I have related this event as vaguely—that is, as cautiously—as I could: first, because I know no particulars from authority, for it was but yesterday at noon that the notice arrived; and secondly, because I have heard various accounts; and lastly, because I have been so steeled against sudden belief by lies from all quarters for these five years, that I do not trust my eyes, ears, or reason, and still less those instruments of anybody else.

There are two uncomely features in the countenance of this business. The first is, disappointment. Though the captured stores are counterband, they consist only of hemp and iron, not of masts and timbers, as we expected, and which are what the French want. Whether the magazines of those materials have escaped, or have not sailed, we—that is, I—do not know; but, when all the Ratisbons in Europe are to discuss our enterprise, it is not pleasant to have trespassed on punctilios,—if we, and not the Dutch, were the aggressors—and not to have been crowned with success.

Thus we have involved ourselves fruitlessly in the second inconvenience, of having, perhaps, tapped a new war, without previous indemnification. You diplomatics must canvass all this; and I hope it will be left to such quiet disputants, and not be referred to redcoats and trousers. I have given you your cue, till you receive better instructions. I am sorry to open the fortieth year of our correspondence by opening another of Janus's temples; better, however, in Holland than in Ireland, where we have got a strong friendly army instead of a rebellion.

The weakness of my hand should not serve me for an

excuse, had I more to tell you. This right hand is the only limb not recovered; yet, dreading another relapse, I have not yet ventured to take the air. Perhaps age, and weariness of such frequent returns, rebate my spirit. Illness, that must be repeated, takes off the edge from the enjoyment of health; and, though I seem to have patience, it is rather a state of discomfort. No matter what, I am wearing out; yet take great care of myself, more from dread of decrepitude than from desire of life, in which I can have few joys. I have no affected indifference; for nothing, not even indifference if affected, is becoming in the decline of life. Adieu, my good friend of above forty years! Sure, Orestes and Pylades, if they were inseparable, could not pretend to compare with us, who have not set eyes on one another for nine-and-thirty years!

2015. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 5, 1780.

When you said that you feared that your particular account of your very providential escape[1] would deter me from writing to you again, I am sure, dear Sir, that you spoke only from modesty, and not from thinking me capable of being so criminally indifferent to anything, much [less] under such danger as you have run, that regards so old a friend, and one to whom I owe so many obligations. I am but too apt to write letters on trifling or no occasions; and should certainly have told you the interest I take in your accident, and how happy I am that it had no consequences of any sort. It is hard that temperance itself, which you are, should be punished for a good-natured transgression of your own rules, and where the excess was only staying out

Letter 2015. — [1] Cole's carriage horses ran away on the road from Cambridge to Milton.

beyond your usual hour. I am heartily glad you did not jump out of your chaise; it has often been a much worse precaution than any consequences from risking to remain in it; and as you are lame too, might have been very fatal. Thank God! all ended so well. Mr. Masters seems to have been more frightened, with not greater reason. What an absurd man to be impatient to notify a disagreeable event to you, and in so boisterous a manner, and which he could not know was true, since it was not!

I shall take extremely kind your sending me your picture in glass. I have carefully preserved the slight outline of yourself in a gown and nightcap, which you once was so good as to give me, because there was some likeness to your features, though it is too old even now. For a portrait of me in return, you might have it by sending the painter to the anatomical school, and bidding him draw the first skeleton he sees. I should expect that any limner would laugh in my face if I offered it to him to be copied.

I thought I had confounded the ancient Count-Bishops, as I had; and you have set me right. The new temporal-ecclesiastical peer's estate is more than twelve thousand a year, though I can scarce believe it is eighteen, as the last Lord said.

The picture found near the altar in Westminster Abbey, about three years ago, was of King Sebert; I saw it, and it was well preserved, with some others worse—but they have foolishly buried it again behind their new altar-piece; and so they have a very fair tomb of Anne of Cleve, close to the altar, which they did not know, till I told them whose it was, though her arms are upon it, and though there is an exact plate of it in Sandford. They might, at least, have cut out the portraits and removed the tomb to conspicuous situations—but though this age is grown so antiquarian, it

has not gained a grain more of sense in that walk, witness—as you instance—in Mr. Grose's[2] legends; and in the Dean and chapter reburying the crown, robes, and ornaments of Edward I.—There would, surely, have been as much piety in preserving them in their treasury, as in consigning them again to decay. I did not know that the salvation of robes and crowns depended on receiving Christian burial. At the same time, the chapter transgress that Prince's will, like all their antecessors, for he ordered his tomb to be opened every year or two years, and receive a new cere-cloth or pall—but they boast now of having enclosed him so substantially, that his ashes cannot be violated again.

It was the present Bishop-Dean[3] who showed me the pictures and Anne's tomb, and consulted me on the new altar-piece. I advised him to have a light octangular canopy, like the cross at Chichester, placed over the table or altar itself, which would have given dignity to it; especially if elevated by a flight of steps; and from the side arches of the octagon, I would have had a semicircle of open arches that should have advanced quite to the seats of the prebends, which would have discovered the pictures; and through the octagon itself you would have perceived the shrine of Edward the Confessor, which is much higher than the level of the choir—but men who ask advice seldom follow it, if you do not happen to light on the same idea with themselves.

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

P.S. The Houghton pictures are not lost—but to Houghton and England!

[2] Captain Francis Grose (d. 1791), antiquary.

[3] John Thomas, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster.

2016. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1780.

Though I am always afraid of writing too often (however contradictory my practice may be), especially when I have nothing to tell you, Madam, still it is impossible not to thank you for Mr. Fitzpatrick's verses, which are written with the ease of his common conversation, and in which the rhymes seem the most proper words that could have been chosen to express his thoughts; the reverse of which is generally the case. The progress of cold and hot fits in female education are as naturally described; and your Ladyship must allow, that if morality may disapprove, truth, who is less a party woman, must give her *imprimatur* to the contents; and therefore I cannot conceive why the author should be shy of letting his poem be seen. As Macduff says,

He has no children!

I have been out to take the air, and am going to Strawberry for a day or two to season myself, before I return into a bit of the world, into which I shall step as reluctantly and timidly as a boy into cold water. I am so demolished, decayed, and so nervous, that the clapping of a door makes me quiver like a poplar. My spirits, if I did not struggle, are disposed to sympathize with my nerves; but I think while one has any sense left, one may keep one's mind under government.

I do not agree, I confess, with our Lord and his brother about Ireland. The present calm may, perhaps, not be very permanent, that is, when the people shall find that trade does not enrich in a year or two, like a voyage to the East Indies. But as it is my opinion, that, except on accidental tumults, the people never have any strong opera-

tive passions but when actuated by artful interested leaders, I think those who set the late vehemence in motion will be very cautious how they play with such two-edged tools. The leading gentlemen of the country, I am persuaded, were overjoyed at having a pretence for being satisfied, *for* they were within a fortnight of seeing their authority slip out of their hands, and pass to those who, having no opportunity of reaching English ministers, would have discovered treason in the estates and property of their own landed superiors. This is human nature. The great plead the distress of the people; but when they have nursed up the people to a consistency, somebody or other has shrewdness enough to discover that the great are the cause of the distress. This was on the point of happening in Ireland; but I am running into speculation, which is mighty apt to deviate into prediction, when I only meant to answer a paragraph of your Ladyship's letter.

I know nothing more of the egg of a Dutch war that we laid last week, but that Count Welderen was at the King's levee on Wednesday, which surprised me. It was vexatious to have been disappointed of making the important seizure. My first object in politics is to demolish the French marine. My Whig blood cannot bear to part with a drop of the empire of the ocean. Like the Romans, I would have Rome domineer over the world, and be free at home. The old man in me is sensible there is little equity in this, and that a good patriot is a bad citizen of the world; but a citizen of the world, as the world is constituted, would be the most useless animal in the creation, and as much *isolé* as the worthy man in the *Spectator*, who passed his time in playing with his cat and taking a walk to Islington. To be of any use in a community one must act within a possible sphere, and the smaller the province one chooses, the more good one can do. I am persuaded that a good Justice of

Peace, who confines himself to his own parish, is a more beneficial member of society than Brutus or Cato. However, there would be nothing but Tarquins and Cæsars if there was nothing but Justices of the Peace, and therefore one must not refine too much. I never did give a loose to my own disquisitions, but I found it as well to come back to my own common sense, and to the common routine of thinking.

2017. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

You are very suspicious and very unjust, Madam; and I must have been the most ungrateful of men, and the most blind to my own faults, I who am so writative and talkative to those I love, if I had meant the most indirect reproof for your Ladyship's frequent and kind letters. I do not in the least guess what word you could interpret as a reproach. I know very little of what I have written, but I will swallow my Bible if I was guilty.

I return the verses as you command. I should like to have kept them, but have not even taken a copy without permission.

For three days I have been at Strawberry Hill, and was the better for it, though the weather was so sharp. I now go out, but like it so little, that I think I am not so well: my spirits do not stand mixed company; but how should I not be out of order? I have this morning been visiting a royal Duke, a Serene Margrave, and a king's daughter[1]. Think what a constraint upon nerves, that for two months have been seeking repose on cushions and couches, and could scarce find it there!

The print of the Sultan is not new to me; I had it four

Letter 2017.—[1] Princess Amelia.

months ago. *The Critic*, I own, was not so new as I expected; and then my being ill versed in modern dramas, most of the allusions must have escaped me. Does not half the merit of *The Rehearsal* depend on the notes? Excuse me if I write no more, for I am fatigued; and pray do not suspect me of what I never could mean.

2018. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

In consequence of my last, it is right to make you easy, and tell you that I think we shall not have a Dutch war; at least, nobody seems to expect it. What excuses we have made, I do not know; but I imagine the Hollanders are glad to gain by both sides, and glad not to be forced to quarrel with either.

What might have been expected much sooner, appears at last,—a good deal of discontent; but chiefly where it was not much expected. The country gentlemen, after encouraging the court to war with America, now, not very decently, are angry at the expense. As they have long seen the profusion, it would have been happy had they murmured sooner. Very serious associations are forming in many counties; and orders, under the title of petitions, coming to Parliament for correcting abuses. They talk of the waste of money; are silent on the thousands of lives that have been sacrificed—but when are human lives counted by any side?

The French, who may measure with us in folly, and have exceeded us in ridiculous boasts, have been extravagant in their reception of D'Estaing, who has shown nothing but madness and incapacity. How the northern monarchs, who have at least exhibited talents for war and politics, must despise the last campaign of England and France!

I am once more got abroad, but more pleased to be able to do so, than charmed with anything I have to do. Having outlived the glory and felicity of my country, I carry that reflection with me wherever I go. Last night, at Strawberry Hill, I took up, to divert my thoughts, a volume of letters to Swift from Bolingbroke, Bathurst, and Gay; and what was there but lamentations on the ruin of England, in that era of its prosperity and peace, from wretches who thought their own want of power a proof that their country was undone! Oh, my father! twenty years of peace, and credit, and happiness, and liberty, were punishments to rascals who weighed everything in the scales of self! It was to the honour of Pope, that, though leagued with such a crew, and though an idolater of their archfiend Bolingbroke and in awe of the malignant Swift, he never gave in to their venomous railings; railings against a man who, in twenty years, never attempted a stretch of power, did nothing but the common business of administration, and by that temperance and steady virtue, and unalterable good humour and superior wisdom, baffled all the efforts of faction, and annihilated the falsely boasted abilities of Bolingbroke, which now appear as moderate as his character was in every light detestable. But, alas! that retrospect doubled my chagrin instead of diverting it. I soon forgot an impotent cabal of mock-Patriots; but the scene they vainly sought to disturb rushed on my mind, and, like Hamlet on the sight of Yorick's skull, I recollected the prosperity of Denmark when my father ruled, and compared it with the present moment! I looked about for a Sir Robert Walpole; but where is he to be found?

This is not a letter, but a codicil to my last. You will soon probably have news enough—yet appearances are not always pregnancies. When there are more follies in a nation than principles and system, they counteract one

another, and sometimes, as has just happened in Ireland, are composed *pulveris exigui jactu.* I sum up my wishes in that for peace: but we are not satisfied with persecuting America, though the mischief has recoiled on ourselves; nor France with wounding us, though with little other cause for exultation, and with signal mischief to her own trade, and with heavy loss of seamen; not to mention how her armies are shrunk to raise her marine, a sacrifice she will one day rue, when the *disciplined* hosts of Goths and Huns begin to cast an eye southward. But I seem to choose to read futurity, because I am not likely to see it: indeed I am most rational when I say to myself, What is all this to me? My thread is almost spun! almost all my business here is to bear pain with patience, and to be thankful for intervals of ease. Though emperors and kings may torment mankind, they will not disturb my bedchamber; and so I bid them and you good night!

P.S. I have made use of a term in this letter, which I retract, having bestowed a title on the captains and subalterns which was due only to the colonel, and not enough for his dignity. Bolingbroke was more than a rascal—he was a villain. Bathurst, I believe, was not a dishonest man, more than he was prejudiced by party against one of the honestest and best of men. Gay was a simple poor soul, intoxicated by the friendship of men of genius, and who thought *they* must be good who condescended to admire *him.* Swift was a wild beast, who baited and worried all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed; he abused Lady Suffolk [1], who tried and wished to raise him, only because she had not power to do so: and

LETTER 2018.—[1] Henrietta Hobart, sister of John, first Earl of Buckinghamshire, and mistress of George the Second. *Walpole.*

one is sure that a man who could deify that silly woman Queen Anne, would have been more profuse of incense to Queen Caroline, who had sense, if the court he paid to her had been crowned with success. Such were the men who wrote of virtue to one another; and even that mean exploded miser, Lord Bath, presumed to talk of virtue too!

2019. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1780.

The letter I this moment received, Madam, is a great mark of confidence indeed, and I wish I could repay it by reasons for dispelling your uneasiness. One of your apprehensions I think not a very solid one, at least a minute one in comparison of the greater clouds that threaten; I mean your dread of abuse. I know not why, nor how it can be directed personally to one amongst so many.

That the scene grows very serious there is no doubt; nor do I assume vanity from having possessed the spirit of prophecy: a most useless talent, as predictions never serve as warnings. We know prophets are not honoured in their own country: where then should they be honoured?—where they are not known?—where, probably, they never are heard of? I believe your Ladyship has heard me say, that whenever the tide should turn, it would be terrible; and that they who had been fools would, to excuse themselves, say they had been cheated.

Still I do not presume on having judged rightly once, nor shall pretend to go on divining; though I can guess at some things that will happen, but which are not so proper for a letter; and yet you might decipher some of my home opinions from what I said in my last on the leaders in Ireland. In general, I think there is great confusion toward; nor can I foresee what its march will be. The end of its

end is but too well to be guessed, which is very rarely consonant to its intentions; and therefore, even if necessary, not to be anxiously wished.

Age and illness naturally make me more tranquil than I should be at such a moment, if younger. *Esto perpetua!* is always at my heart to say to my country and its constitution; but the hand of my climacteric clock rusts at the hour of peace, and will let me wish nothing but to hear *that* strike. As I am as unlike Oliver Cromwell as possible, I do not like to depart in a storm; nay, if anybody would listen, I would preach moderation; but the superannuated can only sit quiet and observe the progress of the hurricane, or be swept away with it!

I did not write your Ladyship an account on Saturday, as at first I had a mind to do, of Mr. Stanley's[1] horrid exit, as I hoped it would prove one of those common ill-natured expositions of sudden deaths; but it was too true. He was found yet alive, and had given his throat two gashes, but was dead before the company could be fetched from the house. His will, made in July, was so reasonable, that it looks almost as if, having satisfied reason, he thought himself at liberty to indulge his frenzy; but, in fact, the delirium was almost instantaneous. At eleven he had written letters, and left an unfinished one open on his table, and then issued into the road to act his tragedy, where he was found.

He leaves his estate, about 5,000*l.* a year, equally between his sisters[2], and to the survivor, with a jointure of 500*l.* a year to either husband, if surviving. He gives the estate at Chelsea, that came from Sir Hans Sloane, about half of the whole, to his next relation, Lord Cadogan; the residue to Mr. Sloane, with his library at present, and the choice of four pictures; and a small estate in Wales to a most distant

LETTER 2019. — [1] Hans Stanley, Cofferer of the Household.

[2] Anne, wife of Welbore Ellis (afterwards Lord Mendip), and Sarah, wife of Christopher Doyley.

cousin (*vide* note at the end of my *Historic Doubts*[3]), the late Mr. Rice, who being dead before him, the bequest is disputable. His not having altered that disposition is another proof that the madness was very recent. Nay, the evening before his death, or that very morning, he had expressed to one of the company his satisfaction in the way of life at Althorp. In short, it is a most shocking story, and with his father's catastrophe, dreadful to the two sisters!

2020. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1780.

No disparagement to your political labours for saving a state that cannot be saved (for I look on the death-bed repentance of a nation as I do on that of a simple mortal), I had rather have written one line about a watch,

that tick tacks obstinately right,

than have cleansed the Augean mews. I do not mean to exhort you to do nothing but describe the movements of watches and clocks as long as you live, like the mechanic, who made the serpent in *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and ruined himself by making nothing but serpents of all sizes till he was in the Fleet. As little do I mean to depreciate the *one line's* twin brothers and sisters. No! had it as many as the Countess of Holland's issue; but one perfect line as brilliant as Pitt's diamond can efface a jeweller's whole shop; and I suppose that in Mahomet's paradise every true believer will fling his handkerchief to one of the houris in preference to all the rest. This is my case, and next to the one line, I am delighted with the universality of your talents (excepting that one for idleness), and I admire how you can by turns

[3] See *Addition* to the *Historic Doubts* (*Works* of Lord Orford, vol. ii. p. 184), where Walpole prints a note communicated by Hans Stanley, as to the relationship of himself and George Rice through the second marriage of the widow of Perkin Warbeck.

play on all instruments, whether lyres, celestinettes, or country gentlemen, and make harmony out of them all. You might be organist to the spheres, for you make Whigs and Tories, *and high cathedral-men* (a better word than *churchmen*), and Presbyterians move in concert, though as distant as Saturn and the moon. Stay! I should have inverted the order of my planets to make the application more just; for though grim Saturn's belt and satellites strike one at first as proper accompaniments to an allusion to high cathedral-men, yet I must give the preference to the moon as still more consonant to the character of *mother cathedral*, which adheres to the earth as its centre, and only moves round the sun in compliment to and in company with her sovereign.

I have received all your journals with gratitude, and can distinguish where you have *smelted* and refined the materials; but I find I am in a very rhapsodical, that is, nonsensical, mood, and therefore I will try to be a little more sober, though your Aganippean water gets into my head and makes me as drunk as the royal beautifying fluid has made a poor deputy Mentor[1], though only outwardly applied.

I have no news for you but the shocking death of Hans Stanley, who, in a sudden fit of frenzy, went out of the house at Althorp last Thursday, and cut his throat in the public road, as his father did in bed with his wife.

There is a Dutch *sçavant* come over, who is author of several pieces so learned that I do not know even their titles; but he has made a discovery in my way which you may be sure I believe, for it *proves* what I had suspected, and hinted in my *Anecdotes of Painting*, that the use of oil colours was known long before Van Eyck. Mr. Raspe[2], the

LETTER 2020.—[1] Mr. Smelt, previously mentioned, who had been Sub-Governor to the Prince of Wales.

[2] Rudolf Eric Raspe (1737–1795), author of *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, sometime Keeper of the Museum at Cassel. He fled from Germany in disgrace, in consequence of the discovery of his thefts from the collection of the Landgrave of Hesse.

discoverer, has found a MS. of one Theophilus, a German monk in the eleventh century, who gives receipts for preparing the colours. There are copies of this work written in infernal Latin, in the libraries at Wolfenbuttel and Leipsic, in the King of France's, and two at Cambridge, which Raspe has transcribed. He has found, too, a like treatise of one Heraclius. They are very much in the manner of Salmon's works. Raspe writes in English, much above ill, and speaks it as readily as French; and he proves that Vasari, on bad or no information, was the first who ascribed the invention of oil painting to Van Eyck an hundred years after his death. Raspe is poor, and I shall try to get subscriptions to enable him to print his work, which is sensible, clear, and unpretending.

Pray read a little book[3] no bigger than a silver penny, called a Christmas-box, for *me*—yes, for *me*. It is a story that is no story, or scarce one; it is a sort of imitation of Voltaire, and yet perfectly original. There is nature, character, simplicity, and carelessness throughout; observation without pretensions, and, I believe, a good deal of truth in some of the incidents, that I take to have happened. My vanity may have interested me too much, though I see it as a thing not likely to please; but if you read it *twice*, which its brevity will easily allow, I think you will see real merit in it, especially when you know the author is young.

2021. To the Rev. William Mason.

Jan. 22, 1780.

I like much your essay on the celestinette, which I have this minute received. Proceed, and say all that timid critics

[3] *Modern Anecdote of the Family of Kinvervankotsprakengatchdern, a Tale for Christmas 1779*, dedicated to Horace Walpole. It was written by Lady Craven.

would be afraid to say. Show all the blunders and faults of the old masters, and prove that there can be no music, but by exploding prejudices, and by restoring ancient harmony.

I cannot write more now, for one of my fingers, which has long been a quarry of chalkstones, and has been and is terribly inflamed with this last fit, has burst, and is so sore that I can scarce hold the pen. I muster all the resolution and spirits I can, but the latter often sink with the prospect I have before me of increasing pain and infirmity. To talk of prospect is seeming to reckon on old age as a permanency; but in the light I see it with its probable concomitants, be assured I do not brood with luxury over that chance!

Kirgate I cannot employ, for he is gone to Strawberry to print some verses of Mr. Miller;—*oui, véritablement*, of Mr. Charles Miller, and very pretty they are. I shall send them to you, though not as an adequate recompense.

2022. To Robert Jephson.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 25, 1780.

It was but yesterday, Sir, that I received the favour of your letter, and this morning I sent, according to your permission, to Mr. Sheridan the elder[1] to desire the manuscript of your tragedy[2]; for as I am but just recovering of a fit of the gout, which I had severely for above two months, I was not able to bear the fatigue of company at home; nor could I have had the pleasure of attending to the piece so much as I wished to do, if I had invited ladies to hear it, to whom I must have been doing the honours.

I have read your play once, Sir, rapidly, though alone, and therefore cannot yet be very particular on the details; but

Letter 2022.—[1] Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788), father of the dramatist.
[2] *The Count of Narbonne*, founded upon Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.

I can say already, with great truth, that you have made a great deal more than I thought possible out of the skeleton of a story; and have arranged it so artfully, that unless I am deceived by being too familiar with it, it will be very intelligible to the audience, even if they have not read the original fable; and you have had the address to make it coherent, without the marvellous, though so much depended on that part. In short, you have put my extravagant materials in an alembic, and drawn off only what was rational.

Your diction is very beautiful, often poetic, and yet what I admire, very simple and natural; and when necessary, rapid, concise, and sublime.

If I did not distrust my own self-love, I should say that I think it must be a very interesting piece: and yet I might say so without vanity, so much of the disposition of the scenes is your own. I do not yet know, Sir, what alterations you propose to make; nor do I perceive where the second and fourth acts want amendment. The first in your manuscript is imperfect. If I wished for any correction, it would be to shorten the scene in the fourth act between the Countess, Adelaide, and Austin, which rather delays the impatience of the audience for the catastrophe, and does not contribute to it, but by the mother's orders to the daughter at the end of the scene to repair to the great church. In the last scene I should wish to have Theodore fall into a transport of rage and despair, immediately on the death of Adelaide, and be carried off by Austin's orders; for I doubt the interval is too long for him to faint after Narbonne's speech. The fainting fit, I think, might be better applied to the Countess; it does not seem requisite that she should die, but the audience might be left in suspense about her.

My last observations will be very trifling indeed, Sir; but I think you use noble*ness*, nice*ness*, &c., too often, which

I doubt are not classic terminations for *nobility, nicety*, &c., though I allow that nobility will not always express nobleness. My *children's timeless deaths* can scarce be said for *untimely*; nor should I choose to employ *children's* as a plural genitive case, which I think the *s* at the end cannot imply. 'Hearted preference' is very bold for preference taken to heart. Raymond in the last scene says:—

Show me thy wound—oh, hell! 'tis through her heart!

This line is quite unnecessary, and infers an obedience in displaying her wound which would be shocking; besides, as there is often a buffoon in an audience at a new tragedy, it might be received dangerously. The word 'Jehovah' will certainly not be suffered on the stage.

In casting the parts I conclude Mrs. Yates, as women never cease to like acting young parts, would prefer that of Adelaide, though the Countess is more suitable to her age; and it is foolish to see her representing the daughter of women fifteen or twenty years younger. As my bad health seldom allows my going to the theatre, I never saw Mr. Henderson but once. His person and style should recommend him to the parts of Raymond or Austin. Smith, I suppose, would expect to be Theodore; but Lewis is younger, handsomer, and, I think, a better actor; but you are in the right, Sir, in having no favourable idea of our stage at present.

I am sorry, Sir, that neither my talents nor health allow me to offer to supply you with prologue and epilogue. Poetry never was my natural turn; and what little propensity I had to it, is totally extinguished by age and pain. It is honour enough to me to have furnished the canons of your tragedy; I should disgrace it by attempting to supply adventitious ornaments. The clumsiness of the seams would betray my gouty fingers.

I shall take the liberty of reading your play once more before I return it. It will be extraordinary indeed if it is not accepted, but I cannot doubt but it will be, and very successful; though it will be great pity but you should have some zealous friend to attend to it, and who is able to bustle and see justice done to it by the managers. I lament that such a superannuated being as myself is not only totally incapable of that office, but that I am utterly unacquainted with the managers, and now too retired to form new connections. I was still more concerned, Sir, to hear of your unhappy accident, though the bad consequences are past.

2023. To Robert Jephson.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1780.

I have returned your tragedy, Sir, to Mr. Sheridan, after having read it again, and without wishing any more alterations than the few I hinted before. There may be some few incorrectnesses, but none of much consequence.

I must again applaud your art and judgement, Sir, in having made so rational a play out of my wild tale; and where you have changed the arrangement of the incidents, you have applied them to great advantage. The characters of the mother and daughter you have rendered more natural by giving jealousy to the mother, and more passion to the daughter. In short, you have both honoured and improved my outlines: my vanity is content, and truth enjoins me to do justice. Bishop Warburton, in his additional notes to Pope's Works, which I saw in print in his bookseller's hands, though they have not yet been published, observed that the plan of *The Castle of Otranto* was regularly a drama: an intention I am sure I do not pretend to have conceived; nor, indeed, can I venture to affirm that I had any intention at all but to amuse myself—no, not even a plan, till some

pages were written. You, Sir, have realized his idea, and yet I believe the Bishop would be surprised to see how well you have succeeded. One cannot be quite ashamed of one's follies, if genius condescends to adopt, and put them to a sensible use. Miss Aikin flattered me even by stooping to tread in my eccentric steps. Her *Fragment*, though but a specimen, showed her talent for imprinting terror. I cannot compliment the author of *The Old English Baron*, professedly written in imitation, but as a corrective of *The Castle of Otranto*. It was totally void of imagination and interest; had scarce any incidents; and, though it condemned the marvellous, admitted a ghost. I suppose the author thought a tame ghost might come within the laws of probability. You alone, Sir, have kept within nature, and made superstition supply the place of phenomenon, yet acting as the agent of divine justice—a beautiful use of bigotry.

I was mistaken in thinking the end of the first act deficient. The leaves stuck together, and, there intervening two or three blank pages between the first and second acts, I examined no farther, but concluded the former imperfect, which on the second reading I found it was not.

I imagine, Sir, that the theatres of Dublin cannot have fewer good performers than those of London; may I ask why you prefer ours? Your own directions and instructions would be of great advantage to your play; especially if you suspect antitragic prejudices in the managers. You, too, would be the best judge at the rehearsal of what might be improvements. Managers will take liberties, and often curtail necessary speeches, so as to produce nonsense. Methinks it is unkind to send a child, of which you have so much reason to be proud, to a Foundling Hospital.

2024. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 29, 1780.

The weathercock Marquis[1] has taken his part, or rather his leave, and resigned his key on Thursday. But there was a more extraordinary phenomenon in the closet the same day. Lord George Gordon asked an audience, was admitted, and incontinently began reading his Irish pamphlet, and the King had the patience to hear him do so for above an hour, till it was so dark that the lecturer could not see. His Majesty then desired to be excused, and said he would finish the piece himself. 'Well!' said the lunatic apostle, 'but you must give me your honour that you will read it out.' The King promised, but was forced to pledge his honour. It puts one in mind of Charles II at Scoon, before his Restoration. It is to be hoped this man is so mad, that it will soon come to perfection, unless my plan is adopted, of shutting up in Bedlam the few persons in this country that remain in their senses. It would be easier and much cheaper than to confine all the delirious.

Your Ladyship asked me in your last, whether it was the situation of public affairs that affected my nerves: to be sure there would be more Roman dignity in answering, Yes; but something less than truth. I fear one's country is never so near one's heart that the clapping of a door gives it a palpitation. My total weakness and variety of pains, and the trepidation that the least surprise causes on my nerves, make me so occupied with self, that I doubt the case of poor crazy old England does not affect me so entirely as it ought; and as she, however crippled, will hobble on somehow or other; and as my option lies only between suffering and extinction, the surviving world is but a secondary

Letter 2024.—[1] The Marquis of Carmarthen, Lord Chamberlain to the Queen.

consideration. Nay, I am often divided between contrary shames; sometimes I blush at attending more to myself than to my *patria*; and sometimes, at being anxious about a scene in which I can take so little part, and which I must quit so soon! This incertitude is very natural—but as I have no time for affectation, I let myself go according as the several sensations rise uppermost; and the Whig or the superannuated invalid predominates, as the weather-glass of my health mounts or sinks.

I enclose a copy of verses, which I have just printed at Strawberry, only a few copies, and which I hope you will think pretty. They were written three months ago by Mr. Charles Miller, brother of Sir John, on seeing Lady Horatia at Nuneham. The poor girl is better. Sir Richard Jebb pronounced her in a consumption; but he is such a raven that I did not believe him, nor do. The moment she came to town, the Duchess of Ancaster carried her for two days to Lady Elizabeth Burrell's; and as she returned better, and not worse, as I expected, from such a scene, I am little alarmed for her.

When may one expect to see you in town, Madam? or are you learning to skate *à la royale*? Apropos, I was diverted with your Ladyship's calling my princes and princesses *my royal society*. It was as little in my calculation or plan to pass the end of my days with highnesses as with philosophers. *Encore à propos*, Princess Amelie told us an excellent story t'other night of Lady Mary Coke. Her Royal Highness dines once a week at Lady Holdernesse's, with only the party for the evening loo. Lady Mary asked the same honour. The Princess insisted on a very small dinner, 'as she has on those occasions; but found a banquet. As she sat down, the Groom of the Chambers presented to her, as she thought, an empty gilt salver—for what purpose she could not guess; but on it lay (what she

had not seen, being so purblind) two gold pins to pin her napkin, as is her way. Still she did not perceive they were of gold; and after dinner flung them away; when, to the eternal disgrace of magnificence, Lady Mary retired to hunt for her pins.

I forgot to ask you, Madam, if you are not glad that Lord George Gordon is a Scot? Would one deny them the benefit of the Union, and monopolize lunacy ourselves? I was once talking to Crawfurd on our frenzy, and he replied, 'We are not mad.'—'No,' said I, 'but you know we are, and profit of it.'

2025. To the Rev. William Mason.

Jan. 29, 1780.

Here are Mr. Miller's verses: his poetry, it seems, was no secret to you. It is easy, and he has an ear.

Your tenant's[1] late husband has resigned. Have you much joy in such a convert?

Hans Stanley has left various works: one is a defence of our seizing the French ships previous to the last war. It is a dialogue in imitation of Tully's philosophic works, and is written in *Latin* too. Do you wonder he cut his throat? I formerly was obliged to read a poem of his in three cantos at Lady Hervey's, and what was fifty times worse, *before him.* It was the 'Ninth Statue' from the *Arabian Nights*, and in imitation of Dryden's Fables. Whether good or bad you may imagine I cannot tell; I was to stop and admire, and very likely did—at the worst lines in it. Awkward he was, and brayed, but I never knew why he could not read his own work. He was now translating Pindar, and had fetched Dr. Potter to town to supervise it.

Letter 2025.—[1] Lady Conyers, divorced from Lord Carmarthen in May 1779.

Lord George Gordon has had an audience of the King, and read an Irish pamphlet to him for above an hour, till it was pitch-dark, and then exacted a promise on honour that his Majesty would finish it: he did, and then went to skate. It is impossible to wind up a letter higher.

2026. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, St. Charles's Day, Jan. 1780.

I wrote to you last night, and must write to you again, though I do not know whether you have leisure or inclination to attend to the idle occupations with which I am forced to amuse myself, as I seldom now stir out of my own house.

This morning, turning over the second volume of the new *Biographia*, I found the following precious sentence in the last additional note to the life of Dr. Bentley, communicated by the ingenious Mr. Cumberland, who, giving an account, too, of his uncle, Mr. Bentley's writings, *because* the latter has the honour of being related to *him*, says, speaking of *Philodamus*[1], 'it was esteemed by the late eminent poet, Mr. Gray, to be one of the most capital poems in the English language. *Accordingly*, Mr. Gray wrote a laboured and elegant commentary upon it, which abounds with wit, and is one of his best productions.' I say nothing of the excellent application of the word *accordingly*, nor of the false English in the last *which*, which should refer to *it*, and not as he means it should, to *commentary*, nor to the pedantic and Bentleian epithets of *laboured and elegant*, terms far below anything of Gray's writing, and only worthy of prefaces written by witlings who are jealous of, and yet compliment, one another; but *laboured* I dare to swear it was not, and for the wit of it,

Letter 2026.—[1] A tragedy published in 1767.

though probably true, Cumberland, of all men living, is the worst judge, who told me it was pity Gray's letters were printed, as they disgraced him. I should be glad to see what this jackadandy calls a commentary, and which I suppose was a familiar letter, and perhaps a short one; for Gray could express in ten lines, what the fry of scholiasts would make twenty times as long as the text.

Mr. Cumberland, full as ingenuous as he is ingenious, has barely mentioned the edition of his grandfather's Lucan, which, with singular veracity, he says that he, Mr. Cumberland, published. The truth of which veracity is exactly this: the MS. of the notes, I believe, was in Cumberland's possession, who gave it to his uncle for the latter's benefit, and for the latter's benefit I printed it at Strawberry Hill, entirely at my own expense, found the paper, and as it was at least a year printing, and I had but one printer at a guinea a week, it cost me above fifty guineas. Mr. Bentley alone selected and revised the notes, and he and I revised the proof-sheets; and as Mr. Bentley did not choose, for reasons best known to himself, or to his nephew, to appear the editor, Cumberland's name was affixed to the dedication, which, with the gift of the MS., entitled him, I suppose, to the right of calling it *his* publication—an honour, however, which I shall not contest with him. I am no more jealous of such jackdaw's feathers, than I was flattered by them, when Bishop Pearce complimented me on publishing *learned authors*, for so he thought Lucan, because he wrote in what is foolishly called *one of the learned languages*: called so at first, no doubt, by one of those dunces who call themselves *learned men*. Did I ever tell you a ridiculous blunder that happened to our edition by Mr. Bentley's and my carelessness? He had chosen for the motto a note out of the MS., in which were these words, *Multa sunt condonanda in opere postumo*, so they stand in the title-page, but, alas!

Mr. Bentley had rejected the note, and thus the motto quotes a note not to be found in the edition. He did not recollect he had done so, and I never searched for the note till after the edition was published.

Well: I am but expunged out of the list of printers: you are to be dethroned as an author. Mr. Cumberland has written a *laboured and elegant* drama, which by the title I concluded was to be very comical, and more likely to endanger the celebrity of Aristophanes than of any living wight. It is called *The Widow of Delphi, or the Descent of the Deities*, and I am told is to demolish the reputation of *Caractacus*. A *précis* of the subject was published two days ago in the *Public Advertiser* for the benefit of the *illiterati*, who are informed that poor Shakespeare was mistaken in calling the spot of the scene *Delphos* instead of *Delphi*. I hope there will be a dance of Cyclopses (I don't know whether commentators will allow that termination) hammering, by the order of Venus, armour to keep the author invulnerable, who has hitherto been terribly bruised in all his combats with mortals. He is as sore as a tetter, yet always blundering into new scrapes.

I have heard of something you received and suppressed, and I adore your temper, prudence, and virtue. For God's sake be always as firm; let us have nothing that squints that way. I doubt whether it ever ought to be the *ratio ultima* of any cause. I am sure it ought never to be the first ratio of the best cause; and it is certain that only the worst has generally been the better in the end for that *ultima ratio*. Adieu!

2027. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Feb. 2, 1780.

I cannot tell your Ladyship precisely the story of the Duke of Ancaster's presentiment, for I have forgotten it,

having heard it but once imperfectly, and being not apt to listen attentively to dreams and auguries: all I remember was, that once walking with her, he said something of foreseeing he should not live long.

I send your Ladyship, as you order, Lady Craven's novel [1], which is, being very short, full of one long name, but not of long names. It is scarce a story, and I am told, is a translation; but it is very prettily told, and has, I will swear, several original expressions, that are characteristic, and must be her own. There is no mystery or secret about it, except that it was one to me for four-and-twenty hours, being sent to me anonymously, and I was all that time before I guessed the author. The reason of my not naming it, Madam, you will find in my character, which abhors anything that looks like vanity. Though I am very proud of it, do I ever boast of your goodness to me? It is certainly very glorious—

> To have contending Queens at dead of night
> Forsake their down—

and write for me or to me; but honours to me are never unaccompanied by retrospect to myself, where I behold nothing but a wretched skeleton, conscious of a thousand faults and defects, ill-skinned over with one or two studied and negative virtues, and at my best time possessed of only mediocre and commonplace talents—which being a true picture, you will be so good, Madam, as not imagine that I wish to have it retouched, and therefore do not send it me back varnished, I beseech you.

I must certainly agree with you, Madam, about the two mad Lords you mention, for you know I have long thought the whole nation out of its senses. I go farther now, for I am of opinion that, like some animals, who by instinct medicine themselves, we are going to apply that remedy of

Letter 2027.—[1] See note on letter to Mason of Jan. 17, 1780.

insanity, letting ourselves blood. Had the petitions been the tide of an universal torrent, they might have done what good they pleased; but I fear, with you, that that is not the case. Lord Cholmondeley told me that in Cheshire not one of the Whig gentlemen would sign the petition. In Norfolk, the county I know the best, there is scarce a name, except Mr. Coke's, of any of the great Whig or Tory families to the first signature. Nor can I believe, when three parts in four of England were with the court, that even half have changed their opinions in one year, giddy as multitudes are. The court has been thunderstruck with what has been already done; but will recover its spirits, and have a firm back game, for I do not find that one Scotch county has petitioned. If the petitioning committees receive no satisfaction, they will grow outrageous —and then—but I do not care to be a prophet. I like petitions; it is a Whig measure. I wished for, and recommended them five years ago, when they might have checked at least infinite mischief, and prevented the waste of buckets of blood and treasure; but some heads of opposition were still too much in hopes of passing into the closet without breaking open the door! though Yorkshire could have been led to petition then as easily as now. Well! we must still hope the best. Principles are, or ought to be, permanent things; and if they are right, must not be influenced by temporary events. We must only take care not to mistake passions for principles, nor let the latter be the aggressors, especially when the path leads to blood. I dread the spilling of blood for itself. I dread drawing it, because, though the person may suffer, the crown, nine times in ten, is the gainer; and I dread it more particularly now, because my Whiggism was taught to consider France as our capital enemy, and she will be most advantaged by our domestic feuds. The court deserves everything that

a ruined and dishonoured nation can inflict, and has left itself without excuse. Who could plead for it, when its own accomplices and tools fly from it?—But I do hope our friends will remember that we have enemies at sea as well as at land, and that the Temple will not be taken by the Romans, while we are pulling down the Pharisees.

P.S.—I write thus freely, because my letter goes by the coach with Lady Craven's book. It should not whisper my fears to the lowest courtier in the post office, because it is better the court should be alarmed and bend. Its *roideur* would produce all I apprehend.

2028. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 5, 1780.

I have been turning over the new second volume of the *Biographia*, and find the additions very poor and lean performances. The lives entirely new are partial and flattering, being contributions of the friends of those whose lives are recorded. This publication, made at a time when I have lived to see several of my cotemporaries deposited in this national Temple of Fame, has made me smile, and reflect that many preceding authors, who have been installed there with much respect, may have been as trifling personages as those we have known and now behold consecrated to memory. Three or four have struck me particularly, as Dr. Birch, who was a worthy, good-natured soul, full of industry and activity, and running about like a young setting-dog in quest of anything, new or old, and with no parts, taste, or judgement. Then there is Dr. Blackwell[1], the most impertinent literary coxcomb

Letter 2028.—[1] Thomas Blackwell (1701-1757), Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, and Professor of Greek in the same college.

upon earth—but the editor has been so just as to insert a very merited satire on his *Court of Augustus.* The third is Dr. Browne, that mountebank, who for a little time made as much noise by his *Estimate,* as ever quack did by a nostrum. I do not know whether I ever told you how much I was struck the only time I ever saw him. You know one object of the anathemas of his *Estimate* was the Italian Opera—yet did I find him one evening in Passion Week accompanying some of the Italian singers, at a concert at Lady Carlisle's. A clergyman, no doubt, is not obliged to be on his knees the whole week before Easter; and music and a concert are harmless amusements; but when Cato or Calvin are out of character, reformation becomes ridiculous—but poor Dr. Browne was mad; and therefore might be in earnest, whether he played the fool or the reformer.

You recollect, perhaps, the threat of Dr. Kippis to me, which is to be executed on my father, for my calling the first edition of the *Biographia* the 'Vindicatio Britannica'—but observe how truth emerges at last! In this new volume he confesses that the article of Lord Arlington, which I had specified as one of the most censurable, is the one most deserving that censure, and that the character of Lord Arlington is *palliated beyond all truth and reason*—words stronger than mine—yet mine deserved to draw vengeance on my father! so a Presbyterian divine inverts divine judgement, and visits the sins of the children on the parents!

Cardinal Beaton's character, softened in the first edition, gentle Dr. Kippis pronounces *extremely detestable*—yet was I to blame for hinting such defects in that work?—and yet my words are quoted to show that Lord Orrery's poetry was ridiculously bad. In like manner, Mr. Dr. Cumberland, who assumes the whole honour of publishing his

grandfather's Lucan, and does not deign to mention its being published at Strawberry Hill (though by the way I believe it will be oftener purchased for having been printed there, than for wearing Mr. Cumberland's name to the dedication), and yet he quotes me for having praised his ancestor in one of my publications. These little instances of pride and spleen divert me—and then make me reflect sadly on human weaknesses. I am very apt myself to like what flatters my opinions or passions, and to reject scornfully what thwarts them, even in the same persons. The more one lives, the more one discovers one's uglinesses in the features of others!

Adieu! dear Sir—I hope you do not suffer by this severe season.

Yours ever,

H. Walpole.

P.S. I remember two other instances, where my impartiality, or at least my sincerity, have exposed me to double censure. Many, you perhaps, condemned my severity on Charles the First. Yet the late Mr. Hollis wrote against me in the newspapers, for condemning the republicans for their destruction of ancient monuments.

Some blamed me for undervaluing the Flemish and Dutch pictures in my preface to the *Aedes Walpolianae*. Barry the painter, because I laughed at his extravagancies, says, in his rejection of that school, 'But I leave them to be admired by the Hon. H. W., and such judges.'—Would not one think I had been their champion?

2029. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 6, 1780.

I write only when I have facts to send. Detached scenes there have been in different provinces: they will be

collected soon into a drama in St. Stephen's Chapel. One or two and twenty counties, and two or three towns, have voted petitions. But in Northamptonshire Lord Spencer was disappointed, and a very moderate petition was ordered. The same happened at Carlisle. At first, the court was struck dumb, but have begun to rally. Counter-protests have been signed in Hertford and Huntingdon shires, in Surrey and Sussex. Last Wednesday a meeting was summoned in Westminster Hall: Charles Fox harangued the people finely and warmly; and not only a petition was voted, but he was proposed for candidate for that city at the next general election, and was accepted joyfully. Wilkes was his zealous advocate: how few years since a public breakfast was given at Holland House to support Colonel Luttrell against Wilkes! Charles Fox and his brother rode thence at the head of their friends to Brentford. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contains not stranger transformations than party can work.

I must introduce a new actor to you, a Lord George Gordon—metamorphosed a little too, for his family were Jacobites and Roman Catholics: he is the Lilburne of the Scottish Presbyterians, and an apostle against the Papists. He dresses, that is, wears long lank hair about his shoulders, like the first Methodists; though I take the modern ones to be no anti-Catholics. This mad lord, for so all his family have been too, and are, has likewise assumed the patronage of Ireland. Last Thursday he asked an audience of the King, and, the moment he was admitted into the closet, began reading an Irish pamphlet, and continued for an hour, till it was so dark he could not see; and then left the pamphlet, exacting a promise on royal honour that his Majesty would finish it. Were I on the throne, I would make Dr. Monro[1] a Groom of my

LETTER 2029.—[1] Physician of Bedlam. *Walpole.*

Bedchamber: indeed it has been necessary for some time; for, of the King's lords, Lord Bolingbroke is in a madhouse, and Lord Pomfret and my nephew ought to be there. The last, being fond of onions, has lately distributed bushels of that root to his militia; Mr. Windham will not be surprised[2].

By the tenor of the petitions you would think we were starving; yet there is a little coin stirring. Within this week there has been a cast at hazard at the Cocoa Tree, the difference of which amounted to an hundred and fourscore thousand pounds. Mr. O'Birne, an Irish gamester, had won one hundred thousand pounds of a young Mr. Harvey[3] of Chigwell, just started from a midshipman into an estate by his elder brother's death. O'Birne said, 'You can never pay me.' 'I can,' said the youth; 'my estate will sell for the debt.' 'No,' said O.; 'I *will* win ten thousand—you shall throw for the odd ninety.' They did, and Harvey won.

However, as it is a little necessary to cast about for resources, it is just got abroad, that about a year ago we took possession of a trifling district in India called the Province of Oude, which contains four millions of inhabitants, produces between three and four millions of revenue, and has an army of 30,000 men: it was scarce thought of consequence enough to deserve an article in the newspapers. If you are so *old-style* as to ask how we came to take possession, I answer, by the new law of nations; by the law by which Poland was divided. You will find it in the future editions of Grotius, tit. *Si une terre est à la bienséance d'un grand Prince.* Oude appertained by that very law to the late Sujah Dowla. His successors were weak men, which

[2] Mr. Windham had been Lieutenant-Colonel of the Norfolk militia under Lord Orford, and had resigned on the trouble he gave them. *Walpole.*

[3] Lieutenant Eliab (afterwards Admiral) Harvey (1758-1830). He served with distinction under Jervis and Nelson.

in India is incapacity. Their Majesties the East India Company, whom God long preserve, have *succeeded.*

This petty event has ascertained the existence of a certain being, who, till now, has not been much more than a matter of faith—the Grand Lama. There are some affairs of trade between the sovereigns of Oude and his Holiness the Lama. Do not imagine the East India Company have leisure to trouble their heads about religion. Their commanding officer corresponded with the Tartar Pope, who, it seems, is a very sensible man. The Attorney-General asked this officer, who is come over, how the Lama wrote. 'Oh,' said he, 'like a parson.' 'Could I see his letters?' said Mr. Wedderburne. 'Upon my word,' said the officer, 'when the business was settled, I threw them into the fire.' However, I hear that somebody, not quite so mercantile, has published one of the Lama's letters in the *Philosophical Transactions.* Well! when we break in Europe, we may pack up and remove to India, and be emperors again!

Do you believe me, my good Sir, when I tell you all these strange tales? Do you think me distracted, or that your country is so? Does not this letter seem an olio composed of ingredients picked out of the history of Charles I, of Clodius and Sesostris, and the *Arabian Nights*? Yet I could have coloured it higher without trespassing on truth; but when I, inured to the climate of my own country, can scarce believe what I hear and see, how should you, who converse only with the ordinary race of men and women, give credit to what I have ventured to relate, merely because in forty years I have constantly endeavoured to tell you nothing but truth? Moreover, I commonly reserve passages that are not of public notoriety, not having the smallest inclination to put the credulity of foreign post offices to the test. I would have them think that we are only mad with valour, and that Lord Chatham's cloak has been divided into shreds

no bigger than a silver penny amongst our soldiers and sailors. Adieu!

2030. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 12, 1780.

I obey, Madam, as far as writing, to show my obedience; but I certainly cannot amuse you. Politics I disclaim, when Lord Ossory is in town; he sits at the fountain-head, and I can get no purer a draught, than what is adulterated by Betty[1] or Macpherson[2] for their different customers. Yet when nothing is stirring but politics, what can I send? Oh! old Egerton[3] is dead, and has left the Duke of Bridgewater but one thousand pounds of all his millions. They go to a sister[4] and her children, and then to a Miss Sykes; and if she does not become a Duchess, then to the above-said Duke. Another legacy of 5,000*l.* is given to Mrs. Grey, by her husband's sister Lady Di Middleton[5].

Everybody is full of Mr. Burke's yesterday's speech[6], which I only mention as parent of a *mot* of George Selwyn. Lord George Gordon, single, divided the House, and Selwyn set him down afterwards at White's, where he said, 'I have brought the whole opposition in my coach; and I hope one coach will always hold them, if they mean to take away the Board of Works.'

Lord Ossory assures me your Ladyship will be here next week; it will be a red-lettered day in my almanac, from which the gout has expunged most of the festivals. Another

Letter 2030.—[1] Betty Neale, who kept a fruit-shop in St. James' Street.

[2] James Macpherson at this time acted as supervisor of the newspapers which supported Lord North's ministry.

[3] Samuel Egerton, of Tatton Park, Cheshire.

[4] Hester, wife of William Tatton, of Whiteshard, Cheshire.

[5] Lady Diana Grey, third daughter of third Earl of Stamford; m. (1736) George Middleton, of Seaton, near Aberdeen.

[6] On Feb. 11, 1780, Burke made his celebrated speech on Economical Reform.

shall be *Innocents' Day*, for the Ladies Anne and Gertrude—and I believe my devotions at my chapel of ease, in Grosvenor Place, will be as sincere, mind, I do not say fervent, as Lady M. Fitzgerald's at the Lock Hospital, in the neighbourhood.

2031. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 22, 1780.

I HAVE been waiting impatiently for a confirmation of Sir George Rodney's victory over the Spaniards[1], that I might send it to you as dose for Monsieur de Barbantan; but either the Admiral's messenger-sloop has been taken, or he is still pursuing the flying enemy, or gone to the West Indies. However, as both Spain and France allow that Sir George had the advantage, there is no dispute but on the more or fewer of his prizes. Well! but novel as triumphs have been of late, this naval one, and everything else, is drowned in the present great domestic moment. I must prepare you for a new æra—so new, and of such late birth, that I cannot pretend to tell you of what it will be the æra.

I have mentioned our provincial committees, petitions, and associations. They have spread into nearly half the *English* counties, and have acquired additional weight by the approach of a general election; which, in times at all difficult, always put members and candidates upon their good behaviour. Spirit begets spirit, as lethargy is catching from lethargy. Last week Lord North was beaten at the India House on his bargain with the Company, one of the promised resources. Yesterday was much more fatal to him.

LETTER 2031.—[1] On Jan. 16, 1780, Rodney, on his way to relieve Gibraltar, fell in with a Spanish squadron, under Don Juan de Langara, south of Cape St. Vincent. The action took place at night during a violent storm. Only two ships of the Spanish squadron escaped; six were taken, and two blew up. Gibraltar was relieved without hindrance. Part of the fleet returned to England, while Rodney went on to the West Indies.

Sir George Savile, to humour the committee of Yorkshire, demanded last week a list of the King's pensions. The Speaker[2] was suddenly taken ill, and the House adjourned till yesterday. The court, in the interval, took the resolution of resisting the demand, and a pitched battle was fought with reciprocal animosity. At one in the morning Lord North carried a softening of the question, not a rejection, but by *two* voices; which in Parliamentary language or calculation (for in such times the calculators always desert a sinking vessel) is a defeat. The Tories, fearing their popularity in the country, had kept away. Some may return if the crown is pressed; but it will lose as many among the *lookers-out*, who were with it yesterday, as it can recall. In short, I think the ministers must fall, and would increase their own danger every hour if they stayed. The committees in the country will be animated by this specimen of their importance. The opposition will be invigorated by hope, and other counties will be hurried by and into the torrent. In truth, it is to be hoped that the *die* is cast. A change of men and measures may prevent that most dreadful of evils, a civil war; and the longer the court attempts to stem the current, the more destructive will the deluge be. It is to be wished, too, that the tide, which has turned rapidly, may be as swift in its effects; or we shall be occupied by storms at home, and not attend to our wars without.

This is a brief picture or sketch which time must finish. I might expatiate, or form conjectures; but you see that I cannot tell you more than I have of what may be fact. I could make reflections backward, but those you do not want; and it is their part to make them who drew themselves into such a desperate situation from one of perfect happiness and security. If the court is prudent, it will

[2] Sir Fletcher Norton.

yield to the first necessity, rather than hazard the last; and will then have been fortunate that it arrived so speedily and at once. A change is preferable to impeachments or to outrages of the mob. I abhor bloodshed and violence, and heartily wish we may have a quiet revolution in the administration. Should authority interpose to preserve them, it will risk its own annihilation and theirs; indeed, it ceases to be authority when it resorts to force. It delegates its power to force, becomes subject to force, refers the contest to the decision of opposite forces, which is choosing chance for arbiter, and never recovers till placid acquiescence gives authority its only true energy.

You shall hear again as events arise; which probably will be numerous. Things cannot remain in the present state, nor fall back into their usual channel without a change or worse convulsions.

Lady Catherine Pelham[3] is dead, at fourscore. We remnants of happier times should not be sorry to quit a scene so different from what we remember. We aged know how few swim through a turbulent sea to the haven where they would be. Waves press on waves; new actors thrust aside those who commenced the commotion:—but I am running into reflections. I return to pray for tranquillity for my country. If it is not my lot to see it, I shall but escape so much anguish more as I should feel if witness to its calamities.

2032. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 27, 1780.

Unapt as you are to inquire after news, dear Sir, you wish to have Admiral Rodney's victory confirmed. I can

[3] Sister of John Manners, third Duke of Rutland, and widow of Henry Pelham, First Lord of the Treasury. *Walpole.*

now assure you, that he has had a considerable advantage, and took at least four Spanish men-of-war, and an admiral, who they say is since dead of his wounds. We must be glad of these deplorable successes—but I heartily wish we had no longer occasion to hope for the destruction of any of our species!—but, alas! it looks as if devastation would still open new fields of blood! The prospect darkens even at home—but however you and I may differ in our political principles, it would be happy if everybody would pursue theirs with as little rancour. How seldom does it happen in political contests, that any side can count anything but its wounds! your habitudes seclude you from meddling in our divisions: so do my age and my illnesses me. Sixty-two is not a season for bustling among young partisans. Indeed, if the times grow perfectly serious, I shall not wish to reach sixty-three. Even a superannuated spectator is then a miserable being; for though insensibility is one of the softenings of old age, neither one's feelings nor enjoyments can be accompanied by tranquillity. We veterans must hide ourselves in inglorious security, and lament what we cannot prevent: nor shall be listened to, till misfortunes have brought the actors to their senses; and then it will be too late, or they will calm themselves faster than we could preach—but I hope the experience of the last century will have some operation, and check our animosities. Surely, too, we shall recollect the ruin a civil war would bring on, when accompanied by such collaterals as French and Spanish wars. Providence alone can steer us amidst all these rocks. I shall watch the interposition of its ægis with anxiety and humility.—It saved us this last summer, and nothing else I am sure did—but often the mutual follies of enemies are the instruments of Heaven.—If it pleases not to inspire wisdom, I shall be content if it extricates us by the reciprocal blunders and oversights of all parties—of which, at least,

we ought never to despair. It is almost my systematic belief, that as cunning and penetration are seldom exerted for good ends, it is the absurdity of mankind that acts as a succedaneum, and carries on and maintains the equilibrium that Heaven designed should subsist. Adieu, dear Sir! Shall we live to lay down our heads in peace?

Yours ever,
H. W.

28*th.*—A second volume of Sir George Rodney's exploits is arrived to-day. I do not know the authentic circumstances, for I have not been abroad yet, but they [say] he has taken four men [of war], Spanish ships of the line, and five frigates; of the former, one of ninety guns. Spain was sick of the war before—how fortunate if she would renounce it!

I have just got a new *History of Leicester*, in six small volumes. It seems to be superficial—but the author is young, and talks modestly, which, if it will not serve instead of merit, makes one at least hope he will improve, and not grow insolent on age and more knowledge. I have also received from Paris a copy of an illumination from *La Cité des Dames* of Christina of Pisa[1], in the French King's library. There is her own portrait with three allegoric figures. I have learnt much more about her, and of her amour with an English peer; but I have not time to say more at present.

Letter 2032.—[1] Christine, daughter of Thomas de Pise, astrologer to Charles V of France. She was born about 1363, and died before 1440. She was a voluminous writer both in prose and verse. The 'peer' was John de Montacute (d. 1400), third Earl of Salisbury, by whom she was encouraged in her literary pursuits, and in whose household her son was educated.

2033. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 3, 1780.

As my last letter probably alarmed you, I write again to tell you that nothing decisive has happened. The troops of the Palace even rallied a little yesterday on Mr. Burke's Bill of Reformation, or Reduction, yet with evident symptoms of *caution*; for Lord North, who wished to defer the second reading, ventured to put it only to next Wednesday, instead of to-day; and would have carried a longer adjournment with still greater difficulty, for his majority was but of 35, and the minority remained 195, a very formidable number. The Associations in the counties increase, though not rapidly: yet it will be difficult for the court to stem such a torrent; and, I imagine, full as difficult for any man of temper to direct them wholesomely. Ireland is still more impetuous.

Fortunately, happily, the tide abroad seems turned. Sir George Rodney's victory proves more considerable than it appeared at first. It secures Gibraltar, eases your Mediterranean a little, and must vex the Spaniards and their monarch, not satisfied before with his cousin of Bourbon. Admiral Parker has had great success too amongst the latter's transports. Oh that all these elements of mischief may jumble into peace! Monsieur Necker alone shines in the quarter of France; but he is carrying the war into the domains of the Church, where one cannot help wishing him success. If he can root out monks, the Pope will have less occasion to allow *gras*, because we cannot supply them with *maigre*[1]. It is droll that the Protestant Necker, and we Protestant fishmongers, should overset the system of fast-

Letter 2033.—[1] The English supplied Leghorn with fish, till they lost the empire of the Mediterranean in the time of the American war. *Walpole.*

ing; but ancient Alcorans could not foresee modern contingencies.

I have told you that politics absorb all private news. I am going to a ball this evening, which the Duke and Duchess of Bolton give to their Royal Highnesses of Gloucester, who have now a very numerous court. It seems very improper for me to be at a ball; but you see that, on the contrary, it is propriety that carries me thither. I am heartily weary both of diversions and politics, and am more than half inclined to retire to Strawberry. I have renounced dining abroad, and hide myself as much as I can; but can one pin on one's breast a label to signify that, though one is sensible of being Methusalem in constitution, one must sometimes be seen in a crowd for such and such reasons? I do often exaggerate my pleas of bad health; and, could I live entirely alone, would proclaim myself incurable; but, should one repent, one becomes ridiculous by returning to the world; or one must have a companion, which I never will have; or one opens a door to legatees, if one advertises ill health. Well! I must act with as much common sense as I can; and, when one takes no part, one must temper one's conduct; and, when the world is too young for one, not shock it, nor contradict it, nor affix a peculiar character, but trust to its indifference for not drawing notice, when one does not desire to be noticed. Rabelais's *Fais ce que voudras* is not very difficult when one wishes to do nothing. I have always been offended at those who will belong to a world with which they have nothing to do. I have perceived that every age has not only a new language and new modes, but a new way of articulating. At first I thought myself grown deaf when with young people; but perceived that I understood my cotemporaries, though they whispered. Well! I must go amongst those I do

not comprehend so well, but shall leave them when they go to supper.

2034. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, March 6, 1780.

I have this moment received your portrait in glass, dear Sir, and am impatient to thank you for it, and tell you how much I value it. It is better executed than I own I expected, and yet I am not quite satisfied with it. The drawing is a little incorrect, the eyes too small in proportion, and the mouth exaggerated. In short, it is a strong likeness of your features, but not of your countenance, which is better and more serene. However, I am enough content to place it at Strawberry amongst all my favourite, brittle, transitory relics, which will soon vanish with their founder—and with his no great unwillingness for himself.

I take it ill, that you should think I should suspect you of asking *indirectly* for my *Noble Authors*—and much more if you would not be so free as to ask for them *directly*—a most trifling present surely—and from you who have made me a thousand! I know I have some copies in my old house in Arlington Street, I hope of both volumes, I am sure of the second—I will soon go thither and look for them.

I have gone through the six little volumes of *Leicester*. The author is so modest and so humble, that I am quite sorry it is so very bad a work; the arrangement detestable, the materials trifling, his reflections humane but silly. He disposes all under reigns of Roman emperors and English kings, whether they did anything or nothing at Leicester.—I am sorry I have such predilection for the histories of particular counties and towns: there certainly does not exist a worse class of reading.

Dr. E.[1] made me a visit last week—he is not at all less vociferous for his disgrace. I wish I had any guinea-fowls —I can easily get you some eggs from Lady Ailesbury, and will ask her for some, that you may have the pleasure of rearing your own chicks—but how can you bear their noise? They are more discordant and clamorous than peacocks. How shall I convey the eggs?

I smiled at Dr. Kippis's bestowing the victory on Dean Milles, and a sprig on Mr. Masters. I regard it as I should if the sexton of Broad St. Gyles's were to make a lower bow to a cheesemonger of his own parish than to me. They are all three haberdashers of small wares, and welcome to each other's civilities. When such men are summoned to a jury on one of their own trade, it is natural they should be partial. They do not reason, but recollect how much themselves have overcharged some yards of buckram. Adieu!

Yours most cordially,

H. Walpole.

P.S. Mr. Pennicott[2] has shown me a most curious and delightful picture. It is Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first pineapple raised in England to Charles II. They are in a garden, with a view of a good private house[3], such as there are several at Sunbury, and about London. It is by far the best likeness of the King I ever saw; the countenance cheerful, good-humoured, and very sensible. He is in brown lined with orange, and many black ribands,

Letter 2034.—[1] Dr. William Ewin of Cambridge. His 'disgrace' consisted in expulsion (afterwards revoked) from that University for lending money at enormous interest to an undergraduate.

[2] Rev. William Pennicott, Rector of Long Ditton. He subsequently presented the picture to Horace Walpole.

[3] In the notice of the picture in the *Description of Strawberry Hill*, Walpole conjectures that the house represented was Dorney Court, near Windsor.

a large flapped hat, dark wig, not tied up, nor yet bushy, a point cravat, no waistcoat, a tasselled handkerchief hanging from a low pocket. The whole is of the smaller landscape size, and extremely well coloured, with perfect harmony. It was a legacy from London, grandson of him who was partner with Wise [4].

2035. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, March 13, 1780.

You compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently do we see portraits that have catched the features and missed the countenance or character! which is far more difficult to hit. Nor is it unfrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call *the worst kind of reading.* I cannot comprehend but they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition of Atkyns's *Gloucestershire*, as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, *A View of Northumberland*, in two volumes quarto, with cuts; but I do not devour it fast, for the author's [1] predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions, that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country—nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's

[4] Henry Wise (1653-1758), gardener to William III, Anne, and George I.

Letter 2035.—[1] William Hutchinson (1732-1814).

daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called something else in Antoninus's *Itinerary*. I do not say that the Gothic antiquities that I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The site of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps—has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments?—the moment it is uncertain, it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history; and then I neither desire to see or read of them.

I have been diverted, too, to another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo, pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Wray, that he murdered[2]. I doubt whether the letters are genuine; and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character—hers appears less natural; and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of hers, than of his. It is not probable that Lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartment to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they come to light.

You will wonder how *I* should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for my doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter, in which I am frequently mentioned, could be

[2] *Love and Madness, a Story too true, in a Series of Letters between Parties whose names could perhaps be mentioned were they less known or less lamented*, by Herbert Croft (1751–1816), who succeeded in 1797 as fifth Baronet. The letters are fictitious.

written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that Miss Wray desired him to give her a particular account of Chatterton. He does give a most ample one—but is there a glimpse of probability that a being so frantic should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister, and others, with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered Miss Wray, I think, in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could ever see it. There are notes, indeed, by the editor, who has certainly seen it—but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume. I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious; but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of *the young villain*—but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle, who, he says, as is true, checked Lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into Parliament; and must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted Lord Chatham with youth, who was at least six or seven years younger than he was—and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was then not twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder, I see, people will, and talk of what they do not understand; and what care I? There is another trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes that it was

Macpherson who communicated *Ossian* to me. It was Sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimens. Macpherson did once come to me—but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Ailesbury has promised me guinea-eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay.

I am well acquainted with Lady Craven's little tale, dedicated to me. It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it.

I will stop, for I fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention; I think it was of the 28th of last month.

Yours entirely,

H. Walpole.

2036. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 14, 1780.

I am not going to tell you that the administration is changed, for as yet it is not; but it is beaten. Yesterday, on Mr. Burke's bill, the opposition carried the clause for the annihilation of the Board of Trade by a majority of eight votes, though the Lords of Trade voted in their own cause. There was a strange scene of Billingsgate between the Speaker and the minister; the former stooping to turn *informer*, and accusing the latter of breach of promise on a lucrative job, in which Sir Fletcher was to have been advantaged. It is very Homeric war when demi-gods rail, and wound one another. Astrea was in the right to leave earth, when other divinities tread in mortal paths, and in such dirty ones. We, that have quitted the theatre, are a little scandalized at such doings, of whatever side one is. I wish well to my country, but I wish too that my countrymen deserved wishes a little better.

The court still holds out; but there is no recovering the ground that is lost. An opposition so successful will not loiter at Capua. All the mercenaries will follow Sir Fletcher, and pretend it is the cry of the nation that they obey. The longer, too, the citadel is maintained, the more impatient the people will be to have it taken, and the more they will be excited to expect it. In short, a speedy change is the best event that can happen. Passions are so heated, that a little may set them in a blaze; and, though reformation may be the cause, it is not good that reformers should be in a rage before they begin their work. They undo more than they can repair, punish without trial, and disgrace the service before they have effected it. It is the nature, too, of human torrents to turn round like whirlpools; but, as I have not time to tell you more facts, I certainly have none to make reflections, which age, taking itself for wisdom, is mighty apt to dispense. My letter is short, but that is all that is necessary to preparatives. I declare, in spite of my wisdom, that I do not guess what will happen. I pray for the peace of Jerusalem; but what the Pharisees or Sadducees will do next, I do not know.

2037. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1780.

The court-stock, that last week was eight under par, is got up again to fifty-three above par. Yesterday, on Burke's bill, the debate was on the King's household; the clause for cashiering which was rejected at one in the morning by a majority of fifty-three, though the moment before that question the ministers had been forced to let the Contractors' Bill pass without a division.

Still the career of the opposition is certainly a little checked, and I think will not recover by the recess at

Easter, when the court can work more efficaciously than they: for they will separate, and the court can work on separate men; and will not only have recovered spirits from this last advantage, but were thunderstruck by the rapid progress of the spirit in the country. Other causes have contributed to lower the opposition; causes arising from themselves. The profligate and blundering impudence of the Speaker gave the first shock. This was immediately followed by as dishonourable an attack on the same person, Lord North, by Temple Luttrell, one of the brothers of the Duchess of Cumberland, who brought a direct charge against the minister for buying a borough, which Luttrell thought he himself had bought. He made his own corrupt practice very clear, and could not prove a tittle against Lord North. The accusation was voted frivolous. The opposition, too, had thought to carry everything sword in hand, and, owing their late progress to the county petitions, they affected to transfer Parliamentary power to the Associations, who were very ready to affect Parliamentary airs, and accordingly assumed cognizance of matters actually pending in Parliament. This has offended moderate men; and many, who approved the petitions, were alarmed at the Associations—with good reason: for the deputation, composed of three members of each committee, which is assembled in London, are going to take large strides indeed, and intend to propose to their several counties to demand annual Parliaments, and to alter the mode of representation. The first would be an alteration of the constitution, and the last a most dangerous violation of it; and very sorry should I be to see either attempted. Lord Rockingham, the Cavendishes, and that connection, strenuously resist these innovations. Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox push them impetuously, though at first both opposed them: but the first *will* stick at nothing to gratify his ambition; and the latter *must* stick at nothing,

so desperate is his situation. Thus, instead of trying soberly to correct and restore the constitution, we are leaping at once to improving upon it; and thus the national spirit that had arisen, and might have done some service, will be wasted in chimerical projects, and only sow altercation. However, negative good it must have done, for it has checked profusion and waste; and has shown the court that the lion was dormant, but not toothless.

You will perceive, perhaps, that my conjectures and prognostics vary; and it is natural you should conclude that I form my reasonings from the moment. So I do; that is, I conjecture from present appearances, but I reason from the causes that make appearances vary. Bodies of men, multitudes, do not act on one regular system: in the present case, the committee started out of the earth, were not set on foot by the leaders of opposition, and will not be led by them, at least till they have been humoured by them for some time. Besides, their own leaders may not have just the same views as the Parliamentary leaders; and the more articles either or both frame for the political creed in which they are to agree, into the more sects they will split. So much the better, if any part would violate the constitution. It is good that the court should know it will be resisted if it attempts against the constitution: but as no country ever yet had so good an one, though not perfect, I do not desire anybody should mend it; because I do not know that they will not make more errors than they found, and I have not so high an opinion of the virtue or wisdom of the present age as to discern the sublime legislators who can improve the system laid down at the Revolution. To that point let us always return when necessary. It will be time enough to make improvements afterwards.

Observe, this letter is but a week younger than my last. Your nephew says you complained of my silence, but owned

it was occasioned by the delay of two or three posts. I never was so diligent. Now I shall relax a little. The Parliament will go into Easter quarters the day after to-morrow for ten days, and I shall go out of town on Friday. It will be a *grim repose*[1] for them; but at least you will not expect events in the holidays. It will be better that we should run into speculative controversies than into a civil war;—we are every day on the point of single combats. Yesterday one was very near between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton[2], Lord Stormont's late secretary at Paris; for, I assure you, terms are no more managed than in the Senate of Rome, where duels were not the fashion. Well! good night; or I should be too late for the post.

2038. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, March 22, 1780.

Monday, the day you left London, exhibited a scene that has already produced martial consequences, or a second part to the history of Adam and Charles Fox. I do not mean the ministerial victory in defence of the Household: no, I speak of a single combat. Mr. Fullarton (Lord Stormont's late secretary at Paris), broiling over the censure passed on him and his regiment in the House of Lords by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Shelburne, particularly the latter, took advantage of the estimate of the army to launch out into a violent invective on the Earl, whom he named, but

Letter 2037.—

[1] 'Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in *grim repose*, expects his ev'ning prey.'
Gray's *Bard*. *Walpole.*

[2] William Fullarton, M.P. for Plympton Earl. Lord Shelburne, commenting in the House of Lords on Fullarton's appointment to the command of a newly-raised regiment, called him a mere *commis*. The consequence of this remark was a duel (see the following letter).

was stopped by Charles Fox and Barré. Not content, nor waiting to see if Lord Sh[elburne] would resent, he sent the latter an account of what he not only had said but intended to have said, if not interrupted; the sum total of which was to have been that his Lordship's conduct had been a compound of insolence, cowardice, and falsehood. Very well; but to heap indiscretion on passion, he reproached Lord Shelburne with having, as *he had heard abroad*, kept a correspondence with the enemies of his country. My Lord replied, that the best answer he could give, was to desire Mr. F. would meet him the next morning in Hyde Park at five o'clock. They met accordingly: Lord Frederick Cavendish was the Earl's second; Lord Balcarras[1], Fullarton's. Lord Shelburne received a ball in the groin, but the wound is slight and he was so cool, that being asked how he did, he looked at the place, and said, 'Why, I don't think Lady Shelburne will be the worse for it.' This second Scotch extravagance will serve to balance Sir Fletcher's and Temple Luttrell's late absurdities. I wish I knew what would repair one that I have seen to-day, Mr. Wyvill's[2] manifesto. You told me he was a sensible man. How could he set his name to such a performance, which I hear is drawn by a Mr. Bromley? I never saw such a composition of obscurity, bombast, and futility, nor a piece so liable to be turned into ridicule. The third paragraph beginning 'let any man look back to the laws,' I read two or three times before I could guess at the meaning. In the next appears this fustian sally, 'the enormous, the compactly accumulated, the all-devouring influence of the crown.' Why, your Yorkshire squires must think the Giant of

Letter 2038.—[1] Alexander Lindsay (1752–1825), Earl of Balcarres. He succeeded as twenty-third Earl of Crawford in 1808, but never assumed that title.

[2] Rev. Christopher Wyvil (1740–1822), an ardent advocate of Parliamentary reform, delegate of the Yorkshire petitioners.

Wantley is come again to swallow houses and churches like geese and turkeys! The vague and indefinite manner of stating the resolutions at the end, and which betrays a consciousness of their impropriety, destroys all the buckram that was crowded into the rest of the memorial; and the waiving annual Parliaments, till all is done that annual Parliaments are pretended to be wanted to do, is such retrograde or topsy-turvy logic as will give nobody a higher idea of the legislator.

In short, my dear friend, we shall lose all the benefit of the present spirit by the whimsies of men that have not common sense, nor can express even what they mean. The candidates are to satisfy the electors by signing the Association or *otherwise*,—a very definite sentence indeed in a decree of a tribunal that sets itself to change the constitution! Mercy on us! were there not faults enough to amend, but we must leave them; ay, let the people forget them, and turn their heads with points that will engender endless litigation and dispute! Bring them back, I beseech you, if you can, to some sobriety, or, depend upon it, the cause will grow ridiculous. Such innovations dictated by deputies of thirteen counties at a tavern in London, and announced in so wretched a manner and with so little argument, can but be a joke. An arbitrary addition of an hundred members at once without any deliberation or discussion, and including Scotland whether it will or not, and of which not a single county has petitioned, is surely very unwise; but I will say no more. I lament the misapplication of the nation's returning sense; we shall be lost in controversy on speculative points, and the court will call itself defenders of the constitution by resisting such unprecedented methods of altering it.

Dr. Warton[3] was so kind as to call on me this morning

[3] Thomas Wharton, M.D. (1717–1794), of Old Park, Durham, an intimate friend and correspondent of Gray.

and made me very happy, as I was glad to be acquainted with Gray's friend. He was three hours yesterday at Strawberry Hill with Mr. Stonhewer. I did not intend to pursue you so soon, but I could not resist telling you of the duel. However, I will not continue to interrupt you but on good occasions, as I trust to your abilities for managing your wild associates.

2039. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1780.

I cannot be told that you are extremely ill, and refrain from begging to hear that you are better. Let me have but one line; if it is good, it will satisfy me. If you was not out of order, I would scold you for again making excuses about the *Noble Authors*: it was not kind to be so formal about a trifle.

We do not differ so much in politics as you think, for when they grow too serious, they are so far from inflaming my zeal, they make me more moderate: and I can as easily discern the faults on my own side, as on the other; nor would assist Whigs more than Tories in altering the constitution. The project of annual Parliaments, or of adding an hundred members to the House of Commons, would, I think, be very unwise, and will never have my approbation—but a temperate man is not likely to be listened to in turbulent times; and when one has not youth and lungs, or ambition, to make oneself attended to, one can only be silent and lament, and preserve oneself blameless of any mischief that is done or attempted.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2040. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 7, 1780.

I conclude you are now returned to your cure of *souls*, and will be consequently at more leisure, and that one may hear from you. In the meantime you will be glad to hear of the opposition's victory on the petitions last night, when they had a majority of eighteen. The 6th of April ought for ever to be a red-lettered day, and at least as solemn a festival as the 29th of May, for the question carried was, that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and *ought to be diminished.* I adopt the whole sentence into my revolution-creed, and would have added to Magna Charta, that whenever that influence has increased and is increasing, it ought to be diminished. In truth, after the five last years I did not imagine there was vigour enough left in *old* England to take such a jump backwards; but it confirms me more firmly in my opinion that the medium of wisdom consists in restoring the constitution and not in trying tricks upon it. Reinstate it in its rights, bind them tight with ribs of brass, consecrate with the most solemn religion the sacredness of juries, of the Habeas Corpus, and of the liberty of the press; but innovate not on the person of Parliaments—and for the swelling the number of representatives, I abominate the doctrine. I have an objection of great weight with me, that I will not utter in a letter that may be opened. For written engagements and annual Parliaments, I am clear that the first are often abused, and as likely to be turned against the authors; and for the second, they would soon annihilate the dignity of Parliament, or grow such a nuisance that very likely prerogative would be adopted as a counter-poison.

I shall die in these sentiments as corollaries to those in

which I have lived, for I shall not see the event of my predictions. I have been very ill the beginning of this week, and felt as if I had something of an universal palsy, which I suppose was fancy, which I suppose was nervous, which I suppose was caused by the bitter east; but, in short, a very frail tenement is tumbling, and what signifies whether it is toppled down by wind getting in at the garret window, or by the crumbling of the foundations?

I have gotten three comfortably fat volumes in octavo of ancient French *Fabliaux*[1], but they look more good-humoured from their corpulency than from intrinsic gaiety, as many plump men do. The fables are trite as that of Patient Grisel; and the notes, which are the best part, as full of antique usages, are mortally heavy and devoid of taste; but I think you will like to see them, and will send them when I have gone through them, if you will point out a conveyance. But I am diverted at present to a larger and stupendously magnificent work about nothing, only two uncommonly tall quartos containing the memoirs of that singular being Thomas Hollis; a most excellent man, a most immaculate Whig, but as simple a poor soul as ever existed, except his editor[2], who has given extracts from the good creature's diary, that are very near as anile as Ashmole's. There are thanks to God for reaching every birthday, prayers for continuance in virtue and nobleness of designs, and thanks to Heaven for her Majesty's being delivered of a third or fourth prince, *and God send he may prove a good man*; and continual apprehensions of designs of the Jesuits against him. Then there are faithful journals of the days on which he went to such a bookseller's, and bought such a set of books, which he gave to such a public library! This is all splendidly

Letter 2040.—[1] *Fabliaux ou Contes du douzième ou du treizième siècle, traduits ou extraits d'après divers manuscrits du temps*, published at Paris in 1780.

[2] Archdeacon Francis Blackburne (1705–1787).

printed and decorated with cuts by Cipriani and Bartolozzi, and with fine prints of all our saints, Algernon Sydney, Milton, Locke, &c. In short, imagine the history of an old woman that goes to a mercer's to buy a bombazine with etchings of the deaths of Brutus and Cassius.

You will not soon, I doubt, see in print the tracts of Theophilus and Eraclius *De Arte pingendi.* I had begun to gather subscriptions, but poor Raspe is arrested by his tailor. I have sent him a little money, and he hopes to recover his liberty, but I question whether he will be able to struggle on here.

2041. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, April 8, 1780.

The return of the Parliament will naturally make you impatient for a letter, though you will not have expected so much as this will announce. As I am not going to write a romance or an epic poem, I will not keep your attention in suspense, but tell you at once that the court has received a signal defeat already; in which, as well as in the preparations for the engagement, their generals have manifested strange negligence and want of conduct.

On Wednesday, on the question of the new-raised regiments, in which Mr. Fullarton's was comprised, the ministers carried them in the House of Commons by a majority of near forty.

The next day was appointed for consideration of the petitions from the counties and towns; about forty of which, on vast parchments subscribed by thousands of names, were heaped on the table. The opposition had kept secret their intended motions. The very first, made by Mr. Dunning, was a thundering one: the words were, 'that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and

ought to be diminished.' The walls could not believe their own ears; they had not heard such language since they had a wainscot. The ministers, as if this winter were at all like the five last, poorly tried that the chairman should leave the chair; but that would not take now. Thomas Pitt, who never spoke so well before, drew a terrible picture of the difference he had felt between his former journey abroad and his last; from what he knew of the dissimilar situations of his country, then so flourishing, now so fallen! and from what he heard foreigners say of it. This apostrophe, addressed very bitterly to Lord North, threw him into a rage against the opposition, that produced mighty tumult. The details of all this, and more, you will see in the papers. I have not room for particulars. In short, late at night Mr. Dunning's motion was carried by 233 to 215, and, as uncommonly, was instantly reported to the House.

The blow seems to me decisive; for this committee is to continue sitting on the petitions, will exclude any other business, will extract from the petitions whatever propositions it pleases, may ground on those what charges it has a mind, and will carry along all those who have already voted on that foundation; so that, if the ministers attempt to make a farther stand, nothing seems so probable as their being personally accused. To combat on the same field of battle after being vanquished, will, in my opinion, be frenzy. It is to prevent very great mischief that I heartily wish them to retreat before it is too late. The constitution is vigorous enough, when a sudden turn of the tide can, in three months, sweep away a deep-rooted administration. A torrent opposed may damage the foundations of the constitution itself.

These are my apprehensions; but whoever would preach to two heated antagonists is sure of being listened to by

neither, and so I am come hither quietly to ponder my own reflections.

Whoever has seen much, and has read a little, must know that human affairs are subject to these returns of troubles. Great or little, they strike the present spectator as infinitely more momentous than any greater crisis, of which he has only read coolly. I do not pretend that this is a common or small moment; nay, it may have very distant consequences. But one so calm as I am grown, and so retired as I live, knows that even the disorders of nations subside after a time, and therefore I have at least as much curiosity for the conclusion as observation on the events as they pass; though, considering my age and caducity, my curiosity may happen not to be gratified. Well! all one's own time is but a portion of an unfinished history. One does not come on the stage precisely as a memorable period commences, nor quit it just when the curtain drops. Every one is to the history of his country like his own hairs to himself,—millions fall before the body is worn out.

The orator Dr. Jebb[1] is not the physician, but his brother. This is in answer to yours of the eleventh of March, which your nephew brought me two days ago. I shall stop here, because this is not to set out till Tuesday; and as I shall return to town on Monday, which probably will be no neutral day, I shall reserve the rest of my paper for its contingencies. Oh, I had forgotten that in my last I spoke of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton as having been likely to fight. My letter was scarce on horseback before they did fight, as you have seen in the papers. The Earl was wounded in the groin, just where Charles Fox was; on which Sir George Savile said wittily, that Adam

Letter 2041.—[1] John Jebb, M.D. (1736–1786), cousin, not brother, of the physician of that name. He was ordained in 1762, but resigned his preferments in 1775 on conscientious grounds. He then took up medicine. He was an ardent political reformer.

and Fullarton had tried not only to cut off them, but their posterity. It was odd that the same pistols gave both wounds, for Adam had borrowed Fullarton's.

April 11.

Religious prophets were more prudent than I; they commonly formed their prediction *after* events, not before. Would not one have thought that I, who have often denied myself guesses, should have been on my guard against soothsaying?—yet here am I already caught, and the dupe of my own penetration: not but the administration was beaten[2] again yesterday; yet only by *two*—just enough to contradict this letter, and bring poor me to shame: in short, nothing is consistent for two days. Fluctuation is the ruling demon of the times, and perhaps a propitious one! it may prevent a more mischievous devil from rioting at will. Take notice, that, while any of these incubi reign, I will not be their Flamen and give out their oracles. I will henceforth only tell you where they have left prints of their footsteps.

2042. To the Rev. William Mason.

April 13, 1780[1].

You have sent me a very temperate letter, I own it to your honour, and with great pleasure, as I interest myself in your dignity. I will observe your moderation for many reasons, and chiefly for that I do not pretend to match myself with you. Besides I am heartily for union, so much, that it was a principal cause of my dislike of the introduction of new and speculative, that is, experimental, articles, which could only introduce difference of opinion

[2] On a motion of Dunning's, to exclude from the House of Commons the Cofferer, the Treasurer of the Household and of the Chambers, and ten other court officials.

Letter 2042.—[1] Endorsed: 'To the Rev. William Mason, but not sent, as too strong.'

and contradiction, and consequently would divide our party, and unite and strengthen the other. The constitution, as it was at the end of the last reign, made us the happiest (in which I include liberty as the first ingredient), richest, and most glorious nation in Europe. Do allow me to think such a constitution perfect enough. I want to see that constitution restored.—Amend it afterwards if you will or can.

What happened the other day proves to my sense that there is still strength enough left in the constitution to work itself whole. When in less than five months the spirit of *part* of the people can force, or intimidate the most corrupt and most Tory Parliament that ever was, to add a codicil to Magna Charta, the House of Commons does not want an hundred members more. Few Houses of Commons ever did so much for liberty; nor would I for the universe touch a hair of a system that has conferred such a benefit. You yourself, as one of the first authors of that grace, ought to be fond and tender of an engine by which you have wrought so much good; for should the vote be expunged from the journals to-morrow, it would remain a foundation of right and a precedent to all posterity.

Will you allow me to use the freedom to differ with you on the consequence you draw from the question you ask?—that is, whether the excess of money wasted in pensions does not call for a reform of Parliament. I am sorry you added, *almost for more!* but on that head I should certainly not join you: *cuncta prius tentanda.* In the first place, I do not think the alteration of the present modes would at all prevent corruption. Take away the means of corruption, the effect would fall of course. But surely you do not think that the influence of the crown on Parliament depends on the dry money it has to give! So far from it, the want of money was a principal cause of the American

war. Contracts, commissions, and ten thousand other sorts of bribes infinitely exceed all the votes that are purchased by what the crown dispenses out of its own fob. Ask your dear Tory knights of shires whether all their prerogative principles, which never reconciled them to the house of Hanover in the late reign, have not been wonderfully cleared up by the operation of silent douceurs from the establishment of a militia. Oh, my dear Sir, allow me, who have never budged from the scene of action, to know, at least to think I know, more of these practices, than you who have been warbling in immaculate groves. In truth, it is from indignation at much I know and see, that I can talk cordially but with very few. When our loudest reformers have started out of the mire, like St. Paul, to turn apostles, I recoil and cry, No, no, *non tali auxilio*!—but I will say no more. I do not erect my own judgement as a standard, but I must follow it. I am for adhering to fundamentals that I know: I cannot tell what the consequences of innovations would be. At least, I must have a thorough experience of the abilities of those who give themselves for legislators of novelties, and who to me are but empirics till they have demonstrated their mission. I must own too that their memorial gave me a woful opinion of their capacity. I never knew but Oliver Cromwell who was so great a man that he could afford to talk gibberish.

The majority of the late minority consisted on Monday in but two. Do not you see that the Tories are afraid of their own success? would you give them an hundred head more? Jove would thank you for such a hecatomb; but I am to blame, and am ungrateful to dispute with you—excuse an old dying Whig!

Mr. Hollis's *Memoirs* are not published, but sent as presents to the elect. They are certainly drawn up by some

Dissenter, yet, though often silly, often vulgar, ignorant, and prejudiced, they contain some curious facts. They show how the Episcopalian spirit of that arch-hypocrite Secker contributed to the American war; and there is one remarkable anecdote breathing the full effluvia of the reign: Mr. Hollis sent to the British Museum a satirical print against the Jesuits—the curators would not receive it.

There is one paragraph in your letter that I forgot till reading it again, and to which I must speak, not to dispute, but to lament. You say our friends have lost much of their popularity by not concurring on the *new* articles, which the country in general adopt. Does not this prove what I said, that these novel articles will disunite the party? You will see that they have done so; and they who have lost ground in Yorkshire, will gain it in any other places—look at the resolutions from Cambridge. Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox were as much against the new articles as Lord J. Cavendish; but being more pliant politicians, gulped them—for a while. Yet Lord Sh——'s[2] own Wiltshire has disclaimed the Association, which loses ground every *day*; since people have been told that they may have new articles tacked to their subscriptions at the fancy of any private leader of a shire. I, you well know, have not attachment to Lord Rockingham, nor have even once talked to the Cavendishes on this chapter; yet I confess I am shocked and disgusted that men, certainly honest and conscientious, and lovers of their country, should become unpopular, because they will not swallow implicitly novel nostrums, neither discussed nor examined, very problematic, and imposed arbitrarily and inquisitorially as articles of faith or as conditions of election. This seems to me to flow from as despotic a spirit as any ordinance of a court, and to be as bad as exacting subscription to the

[2] Lord Shelburne.

Thirty-nine Articles. For my part I should glory in such unpopularity; but, my dear friend, depend upon it, whoever dictates his own reveries, and insists on their being tests, will soon demolish all that *you* have done.

A dictatorial ascendant must be the work of time. I told you early that demagogues of districts would split us into petty factions, and do the business of the court. The wise, the great man, who is able to conduct the whole party, has not yet appeared. You, who have more sense than your whole country together, must steer and temper it, and not let your work be taken out of your hands and maimed by fantastic legislators, who are vain of their own ideas and do not comprehend the conduct of a great machine. Every day produces some new project or new scent; and we shall be bewildered before anything is corrected; the consequence of engrafting new and heterogeneous propositions on a simple theme; disputable propositions, of which the expedience or inexpedience could not be known beforehand, and which were promulged before they had been weighed—no indication of modesty or discretion: in one word, here are already articlists and non-articlists. I have dwelt on this matter, to show the danger of precipitation or obstinacy. I can be of no use but to warn where I espy a rock: I foresaw the courtiers would clamour on innovations of the constitution, and already their papers teem with those complaints. It can be nothing to me, who shall never be in Parliament, how many are sent thither, or for how long, or for how little; but I tremble at touching fundamentals, and love no precedents that may cut two ways. There is another capital argument with me against disputable experiments, and against losing time on them. Here has been an amazing change in opinions in a moment. The tide may turn as rapidly; and whatever is gained extra, order on such occasions is the first thing subverted on

a new revolution, whereas what is *restored* to the constitution gains new strength, like a broken bone that is more firmly knit after a fracture.

I have done, and done with the subject, but it lay heavy on my mind. Use your discretion; you have more solidity as well as more parts than I. We may disagree in modes, but never shall in essentials, for we both mean the same thing. Nor do I want to convert you to my opinion; but as you are an active man, and I only a speculative one, there is no harm in my advertising you of whatever I think may prejudice the cause, and you will always judge for yourself whether I have reason or not. Adieu!

Yours most amicably,

H. W.

2043. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1780.

You have sent me so temperate and obliging a letter, that I most certainly will not dispute with you, what I never wish to do. I will not say a word more on the novel articles. In fact, they cease to alarm me, for they are generally distasted, and not likely to make their fortune. The counties of Northampton, Buckingham, Cambridge, and Wiltshire have rejected them, though Wilts is Lord Shelburne's province; but he, I know, and Charles Fox were utterly against them, and only complied for the moment. In short, it was a disastrous project, has disgusted many of the opposition, and thence delighted the court, who triumph on Mr. Wyvill's attempt to remove subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles, and who would now impose tests, subscriptions, and engagements to arbitrary and indigested plans of his own.

I am sorry for what you tell me of the new unpopularity of certain persons—not for their sakes, for can they regard

it? Are honest conscientious men to lose credit with their countrymen for not swallowing implicitly any crude and disputable propositions that any man takes for an infallible nostrum. What measures of a court could be more despotic? And allow me to say, that any man who would dictate to a whole party ought to have given proofs of consummate abilities before he assumed so dictatorial a tone, and certainly before he will have his mission universally acknowledged.

In good faith, my dear Sir, it requires no great sagacity to foresee that such rashness and obstinacy will soon split the opposition into an hundred petty factions. The court is one compact body and uniform. The opposition is a most heterogeneous assemblage; and as the great man who is to conduct them has not yet appeared, I doubt that without much discretion and address the present spirit will degenerate, and be lost in flippant projects that will clash with each other, and whose leaders will hate each other more than their common enemies. Your good sense must bridle those under your diocese, and even if you think my advice not sound, it may not be useless to have some too circumspect, as well as others too enterprising. The recovery of a majority of twenty-six last week by the administration shows how little cordiality there was in the defection of the Tories. They are no doubt but temporizing with their constituents; perhaps have dispensations, and certainly would have them for taking engagements, which they would not observe when their elections were secured. Some Whigs deserted too, because their electors are officers of revenue. In short, I have said enough to lead you to reflect what variety of interests ought to be weighed, before disputable questions are converted into articles of faith. It is good that an army should be warm, but the generals ought to be very cool.

The House of Lords has rejected the Contractors' Bill,

a measure rash enough on their side, unless, as I suspect, they have received new assurances from the Tories. A strange event has suspended the consequences of that rejection, I mean the Speaker's[1] retirement. It is generally thought his successor will be your friend Frederic Montagu.

Mr. Hollis's *Memoirs* are not published, but sent as presents to the elect. They are certainly drawn up by some Dissenter, yet, though often silly, vulgar, ignorant, and prejudiced, they contain some curious facts. They show how the Episcopalian spirit of that arch-hypocrite Secker contributed to the American war, and there is one remarkable anecdote breathing the full effluvia of the reign: Mr. Hollis sent to the British Museum a satirical print on the Jesuits. The Trustees would not receive it.

You have seen the Russian Declaration[2], I conclude. The European powers will probably oblige us to acknowledge the independence and free trade of America; it will be kinder than they intend it to us, and will give repose to those poor sufferers whom our country gentlemen devoted to destruction, and do not seem even in their hour of resipiscence to recollect.

I am glad you have recovered your Lares and Penates, but don't you find them a little more wanton than you left them? I hope, before you commence your fourth book, that you will not be forced to purify your walks from the deity of gardens.

LETTER 2043. — [1] Sir Fletcher Norton. He was succeeded by Charles Wolfran Cornwall.

[2] The Declaration of the Russian Empress to the belligerent courts of London, Versailles, and Madrid. It was issued in consequence of the seizure by Spain of two Russian trading ships, which were carrying corn to Gibraltar. The Empress stated 'that free ships make free goods; that contraband articles are only such as a treaty stipulates; and that blockades, to be acknowledged, must be stringent and effective.' The Declaration 'became the basis of the "Armed Neutrality," as it was termed; an alliance between Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, to support the claims of neutrals, if needful, even by the force of arms. To this alliance, other neutral powers, as Holland and Prussia, afterwards acceded.' (Stanhope, *History of England*, ed. 1854, vol. vii. p. 45.) The text of the Declaration is given in *Ann. Reg.* 1780, p. 347.

My last was sent by Rotherham, not having received your new route. Adieu!

2044. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1780.

Fluctuation is the present *mot* of the House of Commons. Lord North had a considerable majority, considering the moment, on Thursday. The question was to disfranchise officers of the revenue. As the increase of *them*, by the addition of taxes, has magnificently increased the influence of the crown, the refusal of cashiering them as voters is not very consequential logic after the vote of the former week, that that influence ought to be diminished! The court took a bolder step on Friday, and rejected the bill for *dismembering* contractors, which the Commons had sent to the Lords, who threw it out. This measure would have created a raging flame in the Commons this very day—but the Commons are laid up in the person of their Speaker. He declared himself so exhausted in the chair on Friday, and so ill, that the tender House, to both sides of which his alternate virtues must be dear, have adjourned to this day sevennight: however, it is said he designs to abdicate. A greater quantity of fuel, no doubt, will be prepared on the Contractors' Bill; but premeditated conflagrations do not always kindle like the combustibles of passion. The new tests of the Associations have been rejected by four or five counties. I am heartily glad. I like few or no tests, and not at all the changes of the constitution at which they were aimed.

You say Prussia forbade Russia to assist us, to which she was inclined. Truly, she is a most passive or weathercock despot! Ladies, too, that are forbidden to please themselves, are seldom so passive as to exceed the commands of the prohibitor. And yet she has sent us a memorial, or (in the

modern phrase for a bitter potion) a rescript, that will mightily manacle the vivacity of our privateers. As all Europe is obdurate, I wish they would go farther, and one and all impose peace on us and our enemies. That would be mercy to mankind; but at what Ratisbon is there a precedent of such a pacification registered? The D'Alemberts and Diderots, who are so lavish of incense to philosophic sovereigns, are forced to content themselves with mighty problematic sparkles of philosophy!

I begin this letter, because I am here idle: perhaps I shall not finish it this week. I am sorry my *recommandé*[1] is so unwise for himself as not to cultivate you more. I am satisfied of his virtues, but am not so clear that he knows much of the world. I doubt his patriotism is a little of Spartan hue, that is, morose; at least I shall deem it so, if your humanity does not smooth it. *Here*, I believe it will soon be difficult to be allowed any moderation; but surely one has no occasion to wear one's badge constantly at the distance of above a thousand miles. Well; you have temper, and will not take notice of it. I am satisfied of your complaisance for my *protégés*; and, if they do not meet it as they ought, I am not so unreasonable as to expect or desire you to press it upon them. I remember Sir William Maynard was very impertinent on opposite politics[2]. You must smile as I do when I content neither side. Methinks it is a desirable certificate. One should have charity for all sorts of opinions on religion and government; for no person can be absolutely sure he is in the right on either. Were any mode in either self-evidently true, nobody could dispute on them; but, as men have disputed, fought, nay died, for almost every mode and against every mode, their probabilities are but a *peut-être*. I am a settled Whig; for, if one thinks, one must before my

LETTER 2044.—[1] Mr. Windham. *Walpole.* [2] Sir William Maynard was a Jacobite. *Walpole.*

age have fixed one's creed by the lamp of one's own reason: but I have much Quakerism in my composition, and prefer peace to doctrines. I have so much weakness and worldliness, too, in my nature, that, having a poor opinion of my own infallibility, I can but suspect myself of as much prejudice and passion as I descry in others;—one may be very sure of one's own faults, but one may judge rashly and unfairly on those of others.

22nd.

I could not amass complement enough for my letter, and shall therefore reserve it to Tuesday next. The mountain has been delivered of a tooth; i. e. the Speaker has had one drawn, and will return to the House on Monday,—they say, for the rest of this session; though, *they say*, against the advice of the physicians. You see, when virtue seizes people late, it makes them risk even life itself in the service of their country!

25th.

I am but just come to town, and find that the livery of the House of Commons is still turned up with changeable, or rather is returned to the royal colours. Dunning moved yesterday to address that the Parliament might not be prorogued or dissolved till the demands of the petitions are satisfied. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. On this repulse, the opposition adjourned their committee to that day sevennight, to have time to meditate one decisive measure; which, if rejected, Charles Fox declared he should advise secession, as having no hopes of redress of grievances. That implies *recourse to the people.* As a new Parliament is so near, recourse to the people may imply that the people, if they will be relieved, must choose representatives accordingly. Such steps are constitutional; and, while we have those remedies, I hope we shall never have any other. The session will probably end much sooner than was expected; but

when one guesses, from the sky, of the day, you must not depend upon such an almanac-maker.

2045. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, April 25, 1780.

It is not to boast of sagacity that I tell you that I have guessed rightly. The Tories have returned to the court, and gave it yesterday a great majority on Dunning's motion for an address against proroguing or dissolving the Parliament till grievances were redressed. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. Sir Roger Newdigate, who has affected to have opened his prerogative eyes, though he owned he detested those to whom he had gone over, voted with many other true-blue friends in the majority. The Tories of Cheshire have played as signal a trick. I knew when they were set down as subscribers to the Association that they had sent no deputation thither, and if anybody presented himself there as deputed, that it was without authority, and only from zeal. This is not to dispute, but to justify myself to you, for having been less sanguine than you. I remember a notorious instance of Tory treachery to Lord Holland in the late reign, the particulars of which are too long for a letter. I have not so much spirit as you, and experience and age have made me still more diffident, but they do not shake my principles. They are even more firm on finding we are thus beaten; deceived I have not been, for I expected no better from an alliance with Tory country gentlemen, who hallooed the crown to ravage America, and then attacked it because they had been such gulls. However, I rejoice that they have shown themselves; the crown must dote on them as much as I do.

I was going to send you Fitzpatrick's excellent parody of George Selwyn's advertisement to his electors at Gloucester,

but I find it is in to-day's *Courant*, and will certainly get into the other papers. In its room I will transcribe a riddle, not with all its mysteries, for then it would be inexplicable. The ghosts of Odin and Gray must pardon my speaking so irreverently of what they alone could expound. This fragment I believe genuine, for the editor has not made it dance to Macpherson's hornpipe, nor pretends that there are clergymen living in the Highlands who have been able to say it by heart for these thousand years. This is an Icelandic stanza, the English of which, says Dr. Uno Von Troil[1], is, 'I hang the round beaten gaping snake on the end of the bridge of the mountain bird at the gallows of Odin's shield.'

The sense of this nonsense is, a Mr. Ihre[2] affirms, 'I put a ring on my finger.' I do not lessen the enigma by giving you the solution, for now you are to make out *how* that can be. If you can, you deserve to be poet laureate of Hecla, for Dr. Von Troil says, 'There were poets laureate in Iceland, though they have no laurel, nor anything else but volcanoes and boiling fountains, some scarlet, and some as white as milk.' As you know I love poetry with images entirely new, you would oblige me with a pastoral in which should be a description of this landscape, and which Mrs. Cornelys, if still living, shall convert into a Ridotto.

I am but just come to town, and know nothing else; you can have nothing of a cat but her politics and her studies. Adieu!

2046. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, May 11, 1780.

Mr. Godfrey, the engraver, told me yesterday that Mr. Tyson is dead. I am sorry for it; though he had

Letter 2045.—[1] A Swede who visited Iceland in 1772 with Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks. He published an account of his tour entitled *Letters on Iceland*.

[2] Probably Johan Ihre (1707–1780), a Swedish philologist.

left me off. A much older friend of mine died yesterday, but of whom I must say the same, George Montagu, whom you must remember at Eton and Cambridge. I should have been exceedingly concerned for him a few years ago—but he had dropped me, partly from politics and partly from caprice, for we never had any quarrel—but he was grown an excessive humourist, and had shed almost all his friends as well as me. He had parts, and infinite vivacity and originality till of late years—and it grieved me much that he had changed towards me, after a friendship of between thirty and forty years.

I am told that a nephew of the Provost of King's[1] has preached and printed a most flaming sermon, which condemns the whole opposition to the stake. Pray, who is it, and on what occasion? Mr. Bryant has published an answer[2] to Dr. Priestly[3]. I bought it, but though I have a great value for the author, the subject is so metaphysical, and so above human decision, I soon laid it aside.

I hope you can send me a good account of yourself, though the spring is so unfavourable.

Yours most sincerely,

H. Walpole.

2047. To the Rev. William Mason.

[May 1780.]

The newspapers have told you all that I could have said, and that nothing has happened worth repeating or detailing.

Letter 2046.—[1] William Cooke, D.D. (1711–1787), Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Dean of Ely. The sermon was preached, not by his nephew, but by his son, Rev. William Cooke, Fellow of King's College, and Professor of Greek at Cambridge, 1780–93.

[2] *An Address to Dr. Priestley . . . on Philosophical Necessity.*

[3] Joseph Priestley, LL.D. (1733–1804), theologian and man of science. He replied to Bryant's pamphlet in the course of this year.

The spirit you *raised* is evaporated or split into a thousand branches by mismanagement. The opposition is as much divided amongst themselves, as they and the ministers; and those squabbles more than any other cause have re-established the predominance of the court. The Bishop of St. Asaph[1] showed me a sensible letter from his son, the Dean, who says it was with much difficulty that he prevailed to have the committee of their county adjourned, and that it would have been infallibly dissolved if he had pressed the Association. In short, I can only lament that the sole chance we have had in so many years of recovering the vigour of this country has been thrown away. The ministers, though detesting each other more than the factions in the opposition, have had the sense not to quarrel, and they reap the benefit of *unanimity*, which we professed and could not observe for a moment.

Did you see *Royal Reflections*? They are excellent, and I am persuaded were written by Fitzpatrick. The courtiers are restringing their lyres too. There is an ode, said to be written by Soame Jenyns, and I believe so from one or two strokes of humour, though in general a paltry performance. The preface is an attack on Gray and you, who I am sure are our only Pindars. The conclusion ironically implores liberty:—

> To shield us safe, beneath her guardian wings,
> From Law, Religion, ministers, and kings.

Soame Jenyns does think, I do not doubt, that ministers ought to be our law, and kings our religion. When you are in your own-*issime* vein, I trust you will remember him.

You know, I suppose, that the Royal Academy at Somerset House is opened. It is quite a Roman palace,

LETTER 2047.—[1] Jonathan Shipley, D.D. (1714–1788), Bishop of St. Asaph, 1769–88. He was a strong Whig, as was the son mentioned above, William Davies Shipley (1745–1826), Dean of St. Asaph, 1774–1826.

and finished in perfect taste as well as boundless expense. It would have been a glorious apparition at the conclusion of the great war; now it is an insult on our poverty and degradation. There is a sign-post by West of his Majesty holding the memorial of his late campaign, lest we should forget that he was at Coxheath when the French fleet was in Plymouth Sound. By what lethargy of loyalty it happened I do not know, but *there* is also a picture of Mrs. Wright[2] modelling the head of Charles the First, and their Majesties contemplating it. Gainsborough has five landscapes there, of which one especially is worthy of any collection, and of any painter that ever existed.

There is come out a *Life of Garrick*, in two volumes, by Davies the bookseller, formerly a player. It is written naturally, simply, without pretensions, nay, and without partiality (though under the auspices of Dr. Johnson), unless, as it seems, the prompter reserved all the flattery to himself, and according to an epigram on the late Queen and the Hermitage,—

whispered, Let the incense all be mine.

In consequence, the author calls the pedant the greatest man of the age, and compares his trumpery tragedy of *Irene* to *Cato*. However, the work is entertaining, and deserves immortality for preserving that *sublime* saying of Quin (which, by the way, he profanes by calling it a *bon mot*), who disputing on the execution of Charles I, and being asked by his antagonist by what law he was put to death, replied, 'By all the laws he had left them.' I wish you would translate it into Greek, and write it in your 'Longinus'; it has ten times more grandeur, force, and meaning than anything he cites.

Apropos to the theatre, I have *read The School for Scandal*:

[2] Mrs. Patience Wright, who modelled in wax.

it is rapid and lively, but is far from containing the wit I expected from seeing it acted.

May I leap from the stage to the bench? Sir Thomas Rumbold[3], one of our Indian mushrooms, asked his father-in-law, the Bishop of Carlisle[4], to answer for a child that he had left in a parsley-bed of diamonds at Bengal. The good man consented; a man-child was born. The other godfather was the Nabob of Arcot—and the new Christian's name is —Mahomet! What pity that Dr. Law was the godfather and not [the] Bishop of Hagedorn[5] or your Metropolitan[6]!

Mr. Jones, the orientalist, is candidate for Oxford. On Tuesday was se'nnight Mrs. Vesey presented him to me. The next day he sent me an absurd and pedantic letter, desiring I would make interest for him. I answered it directly, and told him I had no more connection with Oxford than with the Antipodes, nor desired to have. I doubt I went a little further, and laughed at Dr. Blackstone, whom he quoted as an advocate for the rights of learning, and at some other passages in his letter. However, before I sent it, I inquired a little more about Mr. Jones, and on finding it was a circular letter sent to several, I did not think it necessary to answer it at all; and now I am glad I did not, for the man it seems is a staunch Whig, but very wrong-headed. He was tutor to Lord Althorp[7], and quarrelled with Lord Spencer, who he insisted should not interfere at all in the education of his own son.

[3] Sir Thomas Rumbold (1736–1791), first Baronet, at this time Governor of Madras.

[4] Edmund Law, D.D. (1703–1787), Bishop of Carlisle, 1768–87.

[5] Apparently Richard Hurd, at this time Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. He was a court favourite, and was probably called by Walpole 'Bishop of Hagedorn' in contemptuous allusion to the Queen's German Bedchamber Woman of that name.

[6] Markham, Archbishop of York.

[7] George John Spencer (1758–1834), Viscount Althorp; only son of first Earl Spencer, whom he succeeded in 1783. He was First Lord of the Admiralty, 1794–1801, and was well known as a book-collector.

There are just appeared three new *Epistles on History*, addressed to Mr. Gibbon by Mr. Hayley[8]. They are good poems, I believe, weight and measure, but except some handsome new similes, have little poetry and less spirit. In short, they are written by Judgement, who has set up for herself, forgetting that her business is to correct verses, and not to write them. Mr. Gibbon, I doubt, will not be quite pleased; for as the *Epistles* have certainly cost the author some pains, they were probably commenced before the historian's conversion to the court, and are a little too fond of liberty to charm the ear of a convert, which too the author wants to make him in another sense, and that will not please, unless he has swallowed his Majesty's professions as well as his pay.

In another new publication, called *Antiquities and Scenery in the North of Scotland*, I have found two remarkable passages, which intimate doubts of the antiquity of *Ossian*, though the author is a minister in Banff. The first, in p. 77, says, 'if only like a morning dream the visions of Ossian came in later days.' The other humbly begs to know, p. 81, how Fingal became possessed of burnished armour, when the times knew not the use of steel and iron.

My *quondam* friend, George Montagu, has left your friend Frederic five hundred pounds a year. I am very glad of it.

I have heard what I should not repeat, as I do not know that it is true, but to-day I see it in the papers: in short, they say that the unfortunate Knight of the Polar Star[9] has disappeared. The reason given is that a demand of 300,000*l.* more for finishing the sumptuous edifice where Somerset House stood, having been made to the House of

[8] William Hayley (1745–1820), the poet, the friend and biographer of Cowper.

[9] Sir William Chambers, the architect, created a Knight of that order by the King of Sweden in 1771.

Commons, Mr. Brett [10], a member, begged to see an account of what had been already expended, and the next day all the telescopes in town could not descry the Swedish planet. I am sorry, considering that the constellation of the Adelphi was not *rayée* from the celestial globe after their bubble lottery. I suppose Ossian will keep his ground, and would, if Macpherson should please to maintain that he lived before Tubal.

Berkeley Square, May 19, 1780.

Most part of this letter has been written many days; I waited for a proper conveyance. Now it comes to you in what Wedgwood calls a 'Druid's Mug,' you must drink out of it 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.' Mr. Stonhewer gave me the direction, but I find it will not set out before Tuesday. However, I shall not be able to add to this volume, as I go to Strawberry to-morrow, and must leave it for the waggon. Sir Charles Hardy is dead suddenly. Lord Bathurst, I suppose, will have the command of the Fleet, as the senior *old Woman on the Staff*.

I shall settle at Strawberry on Tuesday sevennight, so if you have a mind to hear from me you must write; for I shall know no more there than you in Yorkshire, and I cannot talk if nobody answers me. Somebody knocks, which is a very good conclusion when one has no more to say. Oh, it is Mr. Palgrave: well, he tells me that Sir William Chambers is not gone away, so I retract all, but that the Adams ought to be gone. Adieu!

2048. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, May 13, 1780.

My letters keep touch with the pulse of the times: they are redoubled, or intermitted, or periodic, according as the

[10] Charles Brett, M.P. for Sandwich.

political inflammation increases, abates, or gives place to the common course of things. Of late I have been silent, because the daily papers told you the ordinary events, and that nothing singular had happened. The ministerial recovery is confirmed; the rejection of the Contractors' Bill by the House of Lords occasioned no ferment, and in the country the Associations seem at least to doze. The opposition are not very unanimous, and their leaders have no grounds for reproaching the ministers with want of conduct. The session, I conjecture, will end sooner than is expected, from general weariness. The public is tired of attending to their debates; and the chiefs will be sick of disappointments; especially when not consoled by the thorough-bass of attention and applause without doors. In short, it is my opinion that the vigour of this country is worn out, and is not likely to revive. I think it is pretty much the same case with Europe. I remember that, some years ago, I used to tell you that this is *an age of abortions.* May not this be founded on a still more general truth? May not our globe be arrived at senility? Its youth animated Asia, and displayed there its parts and invention. Europe profited of the maturity of its judgement and good sense, and experience and observation. Africa never partook of the illumination of the two continents but in Egypt, and at Carthage for a moment. America has begun to announce itself for a successor to old Europe, but I already doubt whether it will replace its predecessors; genius does not seem to make great shoots there. Buffon says that European animals degenerate across the Atlantic; perhaps its migrating inhabitants may be in the same predicament. If my reveries are true, what pity that the world will not retire into itself and enjoy a calm old age!

I could carry my speculations on the general decay still farther. Is not the universal inactivity of all religions

a symptom of decrepitude? The aged are seldom converted; they die in the faith they are used to: still seldomer do the ancients invent new systems. The good ladies Mahometanism, Popery, and Protestantism adhere to their old rites, but hobble after no new teachers.

You perceive, by this rhapsody, that I have nothing new to tell you, and therefore I shall adjourn the conclusion of my letter to next week. May not one hope, from the lethargy of the war, that all sides may be sinking into a disposition towards peace? It is a consummation devoutly to be wished!

18th.

I might as well have sent away my letter last week, for it has not increased by allowing it time to grow. The eye of expectation is fixed on Charleston[1], whence nothing is yet come. There are rumours of an attempt to be made by the French and Spaniards on your neighbour, Minorca; the latter having no hopes of taking Gibraltar. The languor of the war makes one expect both sides will be weary of it; at least, I flatter myself we shall pass a more tranquil summer at home than the last.

19th.

Sir Charles Hardy is dead, suddenly, at Portsmouth. I trust it is a good omen: it cannot be a bad one[2].

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again to tell you that I have this instant received your long dispatch about Mr. Windham and Mr. Bagnal, and am very sorry so well laid a plan had no better success. I advise you, however, to watch any opportunity of reviving it.

I am grieved to hear you complain of your nerves, and

LETTER 2048.—[1] General Clinton was at this time besieging Charlestown, which surrendered to him on May 11, 1780.

[2] On the death of Sir Charles Hardy, Admiral Geary was called upon to take the chief command. *Walpole.*

know how to pity you. My own are so shattered, that the sudden clapping of a door makes me tremble for some minutes. I should think sea-bathing might be of use to you. I know, though I have neglected it myself, that the sea air, even for four-and-twenty hours, is incredibly strengthening. I would not have you bathe without advice; but I do beg you to go to Leghorn, if but for three days. I will communicate yours to your nephew. I think his conduct, as far as I know, is very proper. I am sure it is, if it pleases you; for it is you I wish him to study. I have not time to say more now. Only remember to be easy when you do not hear from me, as you may be sure I have nothing material to tell you.

2049. To the Rev. William Cole.

Friday night, May 19, 1780.

By to-morrow's coach you will receive a box of guinea-hen's eggs, which Lady Ailesbury sent me to-day from Park Place. I hope they will arrive safe, and all be hatched.

I thank you for the account of the sermon and the portrait of the uncle[1]. They will satisfy me without buying the former. As I knew Mr. Jos. Spence, I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr. Kippis with reading his letters. He was a good-natured, harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat, fiddle-faddle bit of sterling, that had read good books and kept good company, but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child.

I hesitate on purchasing Mr. Gough's second edition. I do not think there was a guinea's worth of entertainment in the first: how can the additions be worth a guinea and a half?

Letter 2049.—[1] See note 1 on letter to Cole of May 11, 1780.

I have been aware of the royal author[2] you tell me of, and have noted him for a future edition—but that will not appear in my own time—because, besides that, it will have the castrations in my original copy, and other additions, that I am not impatient to produce. I have been solicited to reprint the work, but do not think it fair to give a very imperfect edition, when I could print it complete, which I do not choose to do, as I have an aversion to literary squabbles. One seems to think oneself too important when one engages in a controversy on one's writings; and when one does not vindicate them, the answerer passes for victor, as you see Dr. Kippis allots the palm to Dr. Milles, though you know I have so much more to say in defence of my hypothesis. I have actually some hopes of still more, of which I have heard, but till I see it, I shall not reckon upon it as on my side.

Mr. Lort told me of King James's Procession to St. Paul's: but they ask such a price for it, and I care so little for James I, that I have not been to look at the picture.

Your electioneering will probably be increased immediately, old Mr. Thomas Townshend[3] is at the point of death. The Parliament will probably be dissolved before another session. We wanted nothing but drink to inflame our madness, which I do not confine to politics—but what signifies it to throw out general censures? We old folks are apt to think nobody wise but ourselves—I wish the disgraces of these last two or three years did not justify a little severity more than flows from the peevishness of years!

Yours ever,
H. W.

[2] Frederick, Prince of Wales.
[3] Hon. Thomas Townshend, second son of second Viscount Townshend by his first wife, and sometime M.P. for Cambridge University.

2050. To the Rev. William Mason.

May 24, 1780.

You will have found that I did not wait for your replying, for though I wish to hear from you much oftener than I do, yet I am neither punctilious nor insist on your writing so frequently as I, who am near the seat of news, though it is sure that I should be pleased with whatever you would send me, and should delight in your conversation on any subjects. I sent you a present by the waggon, and a long letter, so this will be very short, for I exhausted myself.

If I was positive, and have been mistaken, I am most ready to acknowledge it. It would ill become me to be obstinate, when I blame others for being too positive. I think I could show what occasioned my being disappointed, but that would look too like not giving up my bad judgement when I pretend to give it up, and I had much rather abandon my own mistakes, than not accede to your opinion whenever I can. In one point I assuredly cannot conform—I mean to your wish that the people would refuse to pay taxes. Alas! what would be the consequence? Some would be committed to prison: the witless mob would break open the prisons, and some of them would be shot, and some of them, for their incendiary leaders would desert them, would be hanged. Oh, my dear Sir, I can never approve of scenes so likely to produce such consequences! I am not so convinced of the infallibility of my principles, of any modes of religion or government, as to risk the blood of a single being. Could I establish my system, whatever it were, should I be able to restore the lives lost in pursuit of my doctrines? Has Heaven authorized me to make this man happy at the expense of another man's life? No, no, nor will I ever let you, who

are all virtue and humanity, be less tender than I am, who am not a quarter so good.

As to this country, it is sunk perhaps never to rise again; but that is a theme would carry me into a volume. All may be reduced to two heads; the nation is *insensible*, and though we have parts we have no wisdom. Orators we have I believe superior to the most boasted of antiquity, but we have no politicians. Can either the court or the opposition boast of a single man who is fit to govern a whole country, much less to restore one? The nation itself is of my opinion: to whom does it look, up or down? From that essential defect everything the ministers attempt miscarries; and the opposition is split into little factions. It is my opinion that Europe itself is worn out. Has one great general or admiral risen out of this extensive war?

The story of Sir W. Chambers is odd. He is certainly in Flanders, but there is no embezzlement; he has money in his bankers' hands, writes to his family, and sends orders to his workmen at Somerset House. In short, it is a mystery, which time, which establishes truth, but much oftener falsehood, must settle. Adieu!

2051. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 28, 1780.

There has been such an uncommon event that I must give you an account of it, as it relates to the republic of poetry, of which you are President, and to the aristocracy of noble authors, to whom I am gentleman usher. Lady Craven's comedy, called *The Miniature Picture*, which she acted herself with a genteel set at her own house in the country, has been played at Drury Lane. The chief singularity was that she went to it herself the second night, in form; sat in the middle of the front row of the stage-box,

Mrs Robinson

from a painting by T. Gainsborough.

much dressed, with a profusion of white bugles and plumes to receive the public homage due to her sex and loveliness. The Duchess of Richmond, Lady Harcourt, Lady Edgecumbe, Lady Aylesbury, Mrs. Damer, Lord Craven, General Conway, Colonel O'Hara[1], Mr. Lenox and I were with her. It was amazing to see so young a woman entirely possess herself; but there is such an integrity and frankness in her consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a *naïveté* as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as gifts of the gods. Lord Craven, on the contrary, was quite agitated by his fondness for her and with impatience at the bad performance of the actors, which was wretched indeed, yet the address of the plot, which is the chief merit of the piece, and some lively pencilling, carried it off very well, though Parsons murdered the Scotch lord, and Mrs. Robinson[2] (who is supposed to be the favourite of the Prince of Wales) thought on nothing but her own charms or him. There is a very good though endless prologue written by Sheridan and spoken in perfection by King, which was encored (an entire novelty) the first night; and an epilogue that I liked still better, and which was full as well delivered by Mrs. Abington, written by Mr. Jekyll[3].

The audience, though very civil, missed a fair opportunity of being gallant; for in one of those —logues, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud as they ought to have done exceedingly when she condescended to avow her pretty child, and was there look-

LETTER 2051. — [1] Colonel (afterwards General) Charles O'Hara (d. 1802), illegitimate son of second Baron Tyrawley. He served in America 1780–81, where he was dangerously wounded, as he was when in command at Toulon in 1793. O'Hara was Governor of Gibraltar, 1795–1802. He was on friendly terms with Horace Walpole and with General Conway, and was for some time engaged to Mary Berry.

[2] Mrs. Mary Robinson (1758–1800), known as 'Perdita.'

[3] Probably Joseph Jekyll (1753–1837), the wit and politician.

ing so very pretty. I could not help thinking to myself how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encounter such an exhibition; yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing—it was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamont and Lady Betty Modish and Indamora; and it was tempered by her infinite good nature, which made her make excuses for the actors instead of being provoked at them. I have brought hither her portrait[4] and placed it in the favourite blue room, and so I have the delightful picture of Charles II and Rose his gardener, but have been forced to remove two others less in my graces, for I have not an inch of room now unoccupied.

Sir Joshua has begun a charming picture of my three fair nieces, the Waldegraves, and very like. They are embroidering and winding silk; I rather wished to have them drawn like the Graces adorning a bust of the Duchess as the Magna Mater; but my ideas are not adopted. However, I still intend to have the Duchess and her two other children as Latona, for myself.

There has been a bloody scramble in the West Indies[5], which the extraordinary *Gazette* has created a victory. Some of Rodney's captains have behaved ill; it is lucky that when our officers do not choose to fight, the French should choose to run away. Admiral Barrington, when he refused the command on Hardy's death, asked where our fleet was, and our seamen and our discipline!

Lord Sandwich is resuscitating Sir Hugh Palliser; he

[4] By Romney.

[5] On March 17, 1780, Rodney fought an indecisive action off Martinique with a French fleet under the Comte de Guichen. It does not appear that the English captains behaved badly, but they misunderstood Rodney's signals, and prevented him from gaining any advantage.

toasted him at the dinner of the Trinity House, &c. Mr. Courtney[6] refused to drink it. Palliser has since been at court.

I shall tell you a *bon mot* of Soame Jenyns, who, by the way, has been half killed at the nomination of members for Cambridgeshire, and then reserve the rest of my paper till I go to town. Seeing some members pairing off in the Speaker's chamber, he said, 'I think there are no happy pairs now in England, but those who pair here.'

Sir W. Chambers has reappeared, and been at the Royal Academy. His absence is now said to have been an *équipée* of gallantry. One would think you or I cared extremely about Sir William when he makes so many paragraphs in my letters; but I hate to write lies and had rather be tiresome than false.

31st.

I have been in town for the birthday of the little Princess[7] of our little court, but heard no news, so am in no hurry to send away my letter. The Chancellor[8] has been dying, and thinks himself that he shall not be able to keep the seals, though the physicians do not despair of him. I was told that the conclusion of Rodney's letter had these words: 'It was the most melancholy day for England I ever saw.' That was a bold assertion. There is a notion that Admiral Parker and his division Pallisered Rodney, but *Iliacos intra muros et extra.*

There is just published a dialogue of Rousseau, the title of which is *Rousseau juge Jean-Jacques.* There are fine strokes of eloquence, you may be certain, and much address in the management of the argument, which is to confute the charges of his enemies; but the groundwork is his old frenzy, com-

[6] John Courtenay (1741–1816), a nephew of the Earl of Bute.
[7] The Princess Sophia of Gloucester.
[8] Lord Thurlow.

posed of vanity and suspicions. He asserts that there is a universal plot against him, composed of the *philosophes*, clergy, his own friends and everybody else, headed by the French government, and supported at great expense; and that the whole world is sworn to keep a profound secret from him all that is said against him, though by somebody's perjury he knows it all; and moreover the plot is proved by one of the interlocutors of the *Dialogue* allowing it to be true. Lord Harcourt himself allows it is a very odd book and certainly Rousseau's, and yet I think is sorry it is.

If the clergy, and *philosophes*, and French administration can all unite in any one point, there is a little more art in France than in England.

June 2.

I have this minute received your letter, but cannot satisfy your curiosity. I know, nor shall know more of Rodney's story or Mr. Strutt's[9] than I, and consequently you, can see in the papers. I have done with London for this season, and have no correspondent there, and shall seldom visit it. My days are drawing to a conclusion, and I wish to pass them with as little pain as I can and with as little vexation, consequently politics can but disturb them. You tell me that of two extreme evils, one must[10] . . . I own that is not my opinion. I think we shall dwindle into an insignificant single island, and in which stupidity may at last settle into despotism; but I think there is not only not spirit, but not sense enough anywhere to bring the contest to an immediate decision; and since we have neither wisdom nor virtue left, I hope not, for I am convinced that only the few good men amongst us would be the victims. I shall go to Malvern in July for a month or six weeks, and visit Nuneham in autumn if I am well enough. Adieu.

[9] John Strutt, M.P. for Maldon.

[10] MS. torn.

2052. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, May 30, 1780.

I hope you will bring your eggs to a fair market.

At last I have got from Bonus my altar-doors which I bought at Mr. Ives's. He has repaired them admirably. I would not suffer him to repaint or varnish them. Three are indubitably Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, Cardinal Beaufort, and Archbishop Kemp. The fourth I cannot make out. It is a man in a crimson garment lined with white, and not tonsured. He is in the stable with cattle, and has the air of Joseph—but over his head hangs a large shield with these arms[1]: . . . The Cornish choughs are sable on or: the other three divisions are gules, on the first of which is a gold crescent.

The second arms have three bulls' heads sable, horned or. The chevron was so changed that Bonus thought it sable, but I think it was gules, and then it would be Bullen or Boleyn. Lord de Ferrers says the first are the arms of Sir Barthol. Tate, who he finds married a Sanders. Edmonson's new Dictionary of Heraldry confirms both arms for Tate and Sanders; except that Sanders bore the chevron ermine—which it may have been. But what I wish to discover is, whether Sir Bartholomew Tate was a benefactor to St. Edmundsbury, whence these doors came? or was in any shape a retainer to the Duke of Gloucester or Cardinal Beaufort. The Duke's and Sir Barth.'s figures were the insides of the doors (which I have sawed into four panels), and are painted in a far superior style to the Cardinal and the Archbishop—which are very hard and dry. The two others are so good that they are in the style of the school of the Caracci. They at least were painted by some Italian;

Letter 2052.—[1] A rough drawing appears in the original letter.

the draperies have large and bold folds; and one wonders how they could be executed in the reign of Henry VI. I shall be very glad if you can help me to any lights, at least about Sir Bartholomew. I intend to place them in my chapel, as they will aptly accompany the shrine. The Duke and Archbishop agree perfectly with their portraits in my 'Marriage of Henry VI,' and prove how rightly I guessed. The Cardinal's is rather a longer and thinner visage—but that he might have in the latter end of life; and in the 'Marriage' he has the red bonnet on, which shortens his face. On the door he is represented in the character he ought to have possessed, a pious, contrite look, not the truer resemblance which Shakespeare drew—'He dies, and makes no sign!'—But Annibal Caracci himself could not paint like our Raphael poet!—Pray don't venture yourself in any more electioneering riots—you see the mob do not respect poets[2], nor, I suppose, antiquaries.

P.S. I am in no haste for an answer to my queries.

2053. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 1, 1780.

I think it my duty to give your Ladyship a faithful account of Lady Warwick and her sisters, from an eye-witness who did not know it would be transmitted to you. Mr. Cowslade[1] is returned from Warwick Castle, and I questioned him minutely. He thinks the Countess will recover, but it will be long and slow. He saw her but twice, and that as she was airing, for the least thing disorders her nerves. Miss Vernon is better, and he thinks,

[2] Cole had stated that Soame Jenyns had been in danger from the Cambridge mob.

Letter 2053.—[1] Probably John Cowslade, Gentleman Usher to the Queen.

though very delicate, in no consumption. He commends both her and Miss Elizabeth extremely, and says he never saw more proper modest behaviour, and that both are very reserved.

This is all I really have to say, Madam. Nay, though so proud of the honour of being your Ladyship's gazetteer, I foresee I shall be obliged to resign my office, for a reason that the present ministers will think a very bad one—my being totally unfit for my place. It is too hard on a poor writer of an Evening Post, to be forced to labour in his vocation only in summer. Mr. Bates had rather lie than speak truth; and for fear he should even be suspected of veracity, he has chosen the Duke of Richmond for the hero of his abuse—but I, who have no invention, and confine myself to matters of fact, cannot relate what never happened. Campaigns are out of my depth. I neither understand Lord Amherst, nor what he ought to understand—the army. I do not know a first rate from a tenth; nay, nor how many rates there are, nor how small a large ship may be. I cannot expound a *Gazette* after all the pains in the world have been taken to make it unintelligible; and as our whole war consists in confounding the truth, I am not qualified to register King Mars's or Earl Neptune's campaigns. Since poor Lady Blandford's death I shall have no opportunity of meeting Lady Greenwich and hearing her break her bulk of scandal. There is not so untittletattling a village as Twickenham in the island; and if Mr. Cambridge did not gallop the roads for intelligence, I believe the grass would grow in our ears.

I have some other employments that I could wish to resign too; more exalted, though not so flattering; but having no salaries annexed to them, I should gain no patriot credit by giving them up. Nobody ever felt the slavery of court attendance more than I did on Monday.

The country was gushing with verdure and beauty, the day was sultry, and Strawberry as cool as a grotto—yet I was forced to go to town to a birthday and a ball!

> Oh, 'tis the sweetest of all earthly things
> To live with princes and to talk of kings!
> Then happy man who shows the tombs! said I.

The last line was certainly written for me, who love Westminster Abbey much more than levees and circles—and no treason, I hope—fond enough of kings as soon as they have a canopy of *stone* over them.

On Tuesday I was asked to a conversation-piece at Lady Clermont's, and there I found that Thalestris, the Princess Daskiou, and her son and daughter. The lad is a tolerable Pompey; the daughter a perfect Tartar. The mother, who I hoped had forgotten me, recollected our having passed an evening together at Northumberland House, as she told Lady Clermont; but as she did not claim me, I shall not leave my name at her lodgings in Blood-bowl Alley.

Your Ireland, I find, has spoken out, though professing much decorum. The Chancellor is for firmness; as if frowns would pass more current in Ireland than in America. The heir-apparent of the seals[2], out of contradiction both to the Chancellor and to his own treatment of Dr. Franklin, takes the side of acquiescence; and probably will prevail, for Lord Thurlow is in so bad a way that if he lives he is not likely to be able to execute his office.

Yesterday's papers say the Church of England is to assemble to-morrow in St. George's Fields, and to follow their metropolitan, Lord George Gordon, to the House of Commons, to demand that the defender of the faith should be forced to part with his whore of Babylon; so his triple crown is in as much peril as his other diadems! but your

[2] Alexander Wedderburn, Attorney-General.

Ladyship can read the papers as well as I, and when I recur to them you must yourself be weary of a—

MERCURIUS RUSTICUS.

2054. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 3, 1780.

I KNOW that a governor or a gazetteer ought not to desert their posts, if a town is besieged, or a town is full of news; and therefore, Madam, I resume my office. I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. Till I heard the Horse and Foot Guards were gone to their rescue, I expected nothing but some dire misfortune; and the first thing I heard this morning was that part of the town had had a fortunate escape from being burnt after ten last night. You must not expect order, Madam; I must recollect circumstances as they occur; and the best idea I can give your Ladyship of the tumult will be to relate it as I heard it.

I had come to town in the morning on a private occasion, and found it so much as I left it, that though I saw a few blue cockades here and there, I only took them for new recruits. Nobody came in; between seven and eight I saw a hack and another coach arrive at Lord Shelburne's, and thence concluded that Lord George Gordon's trumpet had brayed to no purpose. At eight I went to Gloucester House; the Duchess told me there had been a riot, and that Lord Mansfield's glasses had been broken, and a bishop's, but that most of the populace were dispersed. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived; and then we heard a much more alarming account. The concourse had been incredible, and had by no means obeyed the injunctions of their apostle, or rather had interpreted the

spirit instead of the letter. The Duke had reached the House with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. There were the Lords Hillsborough, Stormont, Townshend, without their bags, and with their hair dishevelled about their ears, and Lord Willoughby[1] without his periwig, and Lord Mansfield, whose glasses had been broken, quivering on the woolsack like an aspen. Lord Ashburnham had been torn out of his chariot, the Bishop of Lincoln[2] ill-treated, the Duke of Northumberland had lost his watch in the holy hurly-burly, and Mr. Mackenzie his snuff-box and spectacles. Alarm came that the mob had thrown down Lord Boston, and were trampling him to death; which they almost did. They had diswigged Lord Bathurst on his answering them stoutly, and told him he was the Pope, and an old woman; thus splitting Pope Joan into two. Lord Hillsborough, on being taxed with negligence, affirmed that the Cabinet had the day before empowered Lord North to take precautions; but two Justices that were called denied having received any orders. Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the Duke's order to inquire what was doing in the other House; but though he was not suffered to pass he reasoned the mob into releasing him,—yet, he said, he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances.

About eight the Lords adjourned, and were suffered to go home; though the rioters declared that if the other House did not repeal the bill, there would at night be terrible mischief. Mr. Burke's name had been given out as the object of resentment. General Conway I knew would be

LETTER 2054.—[1] John Peyto Verney (1738–1816), fourteenth Baron Willoughby de Broke.

[2] Thomas Thurlow, D.D. (1737–1791), brother of the Chancellor; afterwards Dean of St. Paul's and Bishop of Durham.

intrepid and not give way; nor did he, but inspired the other House with his own resolution. Lord George Gordon was running backwards and forwards, from the windows of the Speaker's Chamber denouncing all that spoke against him to the mob in the lobby. Mr. Conway tasked him severely both in the House and aside, and Colonel Murray[3] told him he was a disgrace to his family. Still the members were besieged and locked up for four hours, nor could divide, as the lobby was crammed. Mr. Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish, with whom I supped afterwards, told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out sword in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.

Blue banners had been waved from tops of houses at Whitehall as signals to the people, while the coaches passed, whom they should applaud or abuse. Sir George Savile's and Charles Turner's[4] coaches were demolished. Ellis, whom they took for a Popish gentleman, they carried prisoner to the Guildhall in Westminster, and he escaped by a ladder out of a window. Lord Mahon harangued the people from the balcony of a coffee-house and begged them to retire; but at past ten a new scene opened. The mob forced the Sardinian minister's[5] chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gutted it. He saved nothing but two chalices; lost the silver lamps, &c., and the benches being tossed into the street, were food for a bonfire, with the blazing brands of which they set fire to the inside of the chapel, nor, till the Guards arrived, would suffer the engines to play. My cousin, T. Walpole, fetched poor Madam Cordon, who was

[3] Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. James Murray, second son of Lord George Murray (the Pretender's General), and uncle of the Duke of Athol; M.P. for Perthshire; d. 1794.

[4] Charles Turner, of Kirkleatham Park, Yorkshire, M.P. for the city of York.

[5] The Marquis de Cordon.

ill, and guarded her in his house till three in the morning, when all was quiet.

Old Haslang's[6] chapel has undergone the same fate, all except the ordeal. They found stores of mass-books and run tea[7].

This is a slight and hasty sketch, Madam. On Tuesday the House of Commons is to consider the Popish laws. I forgot to tell you that the bishops not daring to appear, the Winchester Bill, which had passed the Commons, was thrown out.

No saint was ever more diabolic than Lord George Gordon. Eleven wretches are in prison for the outrage at Cordon's, and will be hanged instead of their arch-incendiary. One person seized is a Russian officer, who had the impudence to claim acquaintance with the Sardinian minister, and desired to be released. Cordon replied, 'Oui, Monsieur, je vous connoissois, mais je ne vous connois plus.' I do not know whether he is an associate of Thalestris[8], who seems to have snuffed a revolution in the wind.

I hear there are hopes of some temperament in Ireland. Somebody, I forget who, has observed that the English government pretends not to *quarter* soldiers in Ireland, and therefore must be glad of a bill. It is time some of our wounds should close; or, I believe, I shall soon have too much employment, instead of wanting materials for letters.

2055. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, June 4, 1780.

I went to town on Friday for a private supper, to which I was engaged. There I found your letter, finished mine

[6] The Bavarian Envoy.

[7] Haslang was addicted to smuggling.

[8] The Princess Daschkov. See preceding letter.

and put it into the post, and went out; and it was past eight at night before I heard a syllable of the prodigious tumult at Westminster. All yesterday I had not a minute's time to write you a line, so you will have seen all the particulars in the common papers. Miraculously no lives were lost, nor was part of the town burnt, as it was near being, for the mob not only set on fire the Sardinian minister's chapel, but, till the Guards arrived, would not suffer the engines to play on it.

Nothing ever surpassed the abominable behaviour of the ruffian apostle that preached up this storm. I always, you know well, disliked and condemned the repeal of the Popish statutes, and am steadfast in that opinion; but I abhor such Protestantism as breathes the soul of Popery, and commences a reformation by attempting a massacre. The frantic incendiary ran backwards and forwards, naming names for slaughter to the mob: fortunately his disciples were not expert at assassination, and nobody was murdered for the gospel's sake. So blind was his zeal, and so ill tutored his outlaws, that though the petition was addressed and carried to the House of Commons, the chief fury fell on the peers, and on some of the most inoffensive, as Lord Willoughby and Lord Boston, the latter of whom was thrown down and trampled on, and had a most narrow escape.

The demolition of two chapels of foreign ministers, which they enjoy by the law of nations, and did enjoy before the repeal, is another savage outrage, and I suppose will throw the King of Sardinia into the general league against us. One may hope, I trust, that the universal detestation which the Gordon has drawn on himself, will disarm his further power of mischief, though a statute of lunacy ought to be his doom. Colonel Murray, uncle of the Duke of Athol, said to him in the House of Commons, 'I see many lives

will be lost, but, by God, yours shall be one of them!' Some of the coolest of the members have told me that there was one moment in which they thought they should be forced to open the doors of the House and fight their way out, sword in hand, as their only chance of safety.

The wretch had marked the Duke of Richmond to the populace for sacrifice, and they called for him, but the greater part, not knowing on what view, echoed the sound, and called for *the noble Duke of Richmond*. Lord Mahon counteracted the incendiary, and chiefly contributed by his harangues to conjure down the tempest.

What steps are to be taken I do not know—what preventive measures were taken are to be summed up thus: the Cabinet Council, on Thursday, authorized Lord North to prepare the civil officers to keep the peace, and *he forgot it* till two o'clock at noon, some hours after the procession had begun to march.

Well, here is a religious war added to all our civil and foreign wars, enough surely to gorge Bellona herself, and to throw open the most promising field to France. If these evils could be enhanced, they would be by the confusion of jarring interests and opinions, that cross one another in every possible direction. The Duke of Richmond, who you and I lament is for toleration of Popery, will please *you* by having yesterday offered a bill for annual Parliaments, and is gone out of town to-day, disgusted at its being rejected. Yet, though I differ with him on both points, I worship his thousand virtues beyond any man's: he is intrepid and tender, inflexible and humane beyond example. I do not know which is most amiable, his heart or his conscience. He ought too to be the great model to all our factions. No difference in sentiments between him and his friends makes the slightest impression on his attachment to them; but, like many models, he will not be imitated.

I recommend his example a little to you yourself, my good Sir; because the only little good I can hope to do while I remain here, is to conciliate my friends, whose great outlines are the same, though the folds of their garments may flow in different styles. You seem too much estranged from Lord John[1]. I have often disagreed with him, but always honoured his integrity: surely that is the fountain of principles; whatever has grown on his margin, the source has remained limpid and undefiled.

You despise my weariness and palsied chill of age, but I take nothing ill of a friend. I stand on the threshold of both worlds, and look back and forwards for this poor country with fond eyes, and think that nothing can redeem it, even in part, but sober and well-poised virtue. Violence, unsupported by general national union, will, like Lord Gordon's frenzy, but precipitate destruction, and in its progress be imbued with every act of injustice. That lunatic, whom I should less severely condemn, if I saw nothing in him but lunacy, is horridly black in my eyes, for you know it is my most conscientious opinion that no man has a right to expose any life but his own on any disputable tenet in religion or government, still less on suspicions or jealousies. But I wander, from indignation against him, and will finish lest I dissert, instead of amusing you with news. In vain I try to steep my senses in oblivion, and to lull the remaining hours. Such shocks as Friday's agitate all my sensibility. Jesus! if the Duke of Richmond had fallen a victim to a blind tumult, in which half the sacrificers devoted him to the furies, while half adored him!

LETTER 2055.—[1] Lord John Cavendish; Mason had been his tutor.

2056. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1780.

Not a syllable yet from General Clinton. There has been a battle at sea in the West Indies, which we might have gained; know we did not, but not why: and all this is forgotten already in a fresher event. I have said for some time that the field is so extensive, and the occurrences so numerous, and so much pains are taken to involve them in falsehoods and mystery, and opinions are so divided, that all evidences will be dead before a single part can be cleared up; but I have not time, nor you patience, for my reflections. I must hurry to the history of the day. The Jack of Leyden of the age, Lord George Gordon, gave notice to the House of Commons last week, that he would, on Friday, bring the petition of the Protestant Association; and he openly declared to his disciples, that he would not carry it unless *a noble army of martyrs, not fewer than forty thousand*, would accompany him. Forty thousand, led by such a lamb, were more likely to prove butchers than victims; and so, in good truth, they were very near being. Have you faith enough in me to believe that the sole precaution taken was, that the Cabinet Council on Thursday empowered the First Lord of the Treasury to give proper orders to the civil magistrates to keep the peace,—and his Lordship forgot it!

Early on Friday morning the conservators of the Church of England assembled in *St. George's* Fields to encounter the dragon, the old serpent, and marched in lines of six and six —about thirteen thousand only, as they were computed— with a petition as long as the procession, which the apostle himself presented; but, though he had given out most Christian injunctions for peaceable behaviour, he did everything in his power to promote a massacre. He demanded

immediate repeal of toleration, told Lord North he could have him torn to pieces, and, running every minute to the door or windows, bawled to the populace that Lord North would give them no redress, and that now this member, now that, was speaking against them.

In the meantime, the peers, going to their own chamber, and as yet not concerned in the petition, were assaulted; many of their glasses were broken, and many of their persons torn out of the carriages. Lord Boston was thrown down and almost trampled to death; and the two Secretaries of State[1], the Master of the Ordnance[2], and Lord Willoughby were stripped of their bags or wigs, and the three first came into the House with their hair all dishevelled. The chariots of Sir George Savile and Charles Turner, two leading advocates for the late toleration, though in opposition, were demolished; and the Duke of Richmond and Burke were denounced to the mob as proper objects for sacrifice. Lord Mahon laboured to pacify the tempest, and towards eight and nine, prevailed on so many to disperse, that the Lords rose and departed in quiet; but every avenue to the other House was besieged and blockaded, and for four hours kept their doors locked, though some of the warmest members proposed to sally out, sword in hand, and cut their way. Lord North and that House behaved with great firmness, and would not submit to give any other satisfaction to the rioters, than to consent to take the Popish laws into consideration on the following Tuesday; and, calling the Justices of the Peace, empowered them to call out the whole force of the county to quell the riot.

The magistrates soon brought the Horse and Foot Guards, and the pious ragamuffins soon fled; so little enthusiasm fortunately had inspired them; at least all their religion

LETTER 2056.—[1] Lords Stormont and Hillsborough.
[2] Viscount Townshend.

consisted in outrage and plunder; for the Duke of Northumberland, General Grant[3], Mr. Mackinsy, and others, had their pockets picked of their watches and snuff-boxes. Happily, not a single life was lost.

This tumult, which was over between nine and ten at night, had scarce ceased before it broke out in two other quarters. Old Haslang's[4] chapel was broken open and plundered; and, as he is a prince of smugglers as well as Bavarian minister, great quantities of run tea and contraband goods were found in his house. This one cannot lament; and still less, as the old wretch has for these forty years usurped a hired house, and, though the proprietor for many years has offered to remit his arrears of rent, he will neither quit the house nor pay for it.

Monsieur Cordon, the Sardinian minister, suffered still more. The mob forced his chapel, stole two silver lamps, demolished everything else, threw the benches into the street, set them on fire, carried the brands into the chapel, and set fire to that; and, when the engines came, would not suffer them to play till the Guards arrived, and saved the house and probably all that part of the town. Poor Madame Cordon was confined by illness. My cousin, Thomas Walpole, who lives in Lincoln's Inn Fields, went to her rescue, and dragged her, for she could scarce stand with terror and weakness, to his own house.

I doubt this narrative will not reapproach you and Mr. Windham. I have received yours of the 20th of last month.

You will be indignant that such a mad dog as Lord George should not be knocked on the head. Colonel Murray did tell him in the House, that, if any lives were lost, his

[3] Major-General James Grant, M.P. for Dingwall and Colonel of the 55th Foot.

[4] Count Haslang, minister from the Elector of Bavaria: he had been here from the year 1740. *Walpole.*

Lordship should join the number. Nor yet is he so lunatic as to deserve pity. Besides being very debauched, he has more knavery than mission. What will be decided on him, I do not know; every man that heard him can convict him of the worst kind of sedition: but it is dangerous to create a rascal a martyr. I trust we have not much holy fury left; I am persuaded that there was far more dissoluteness than enthusiasm in the mob: yet the episode is very disagreeable. I came from town yesterday to avoid the Birthday. We have a report here that the Papists last night burnt a Presbyterian meeting-house, but I credit nothing now on the first report. It was said to be intended on Saturday, and the Guards patrolled the streets at night; but it is very likely that Saint George Gordon spread the insinuation himself.

My letter cannot set out before to-morrow; therefore I will postpone the conclusion. In the meantime I must scold you very seriously for the cameo you have sent me by Mr. Morrice. This house is full of your presents and of my blushes. I love any one of them as an earnest of your friendship; but I hate so many. You force upon me an air most contrary to my disposition. I cannot thank you for your kindness; I entreated you to send me nothing more. You leave me no alternative but to seem interested or ungrateful. I can only check your generosity by being brutal. If I had a grain of power, I would affront you and call your presents bribes. I never gave you anything but a coffee-pot. If I could buy a diamond as big as the Caligula, and a less would not be so valuable, I would send it you. In one word, I will not accept the cameo, unless you give me a promise under your hand that it shall be the last present you send me. I cannot stir about this house without your gifts staring me in the face. Do you think I have no conscience? I am sorry Mr. Morrice is no better,

and wonder at his return. What can invite him to this country? Home never was so homely.

6th.

It is not true that a meeting-house has been burnt. I believe a Popish chapel[5] in the city has been attacked: and they talk here of some disturbance yesterday, which is probable; for, when grace, robbery, and mischief make an alliance, they do not like to give over:—but ten miles from the spot are a thousand from truth. My letter must go to town before night, or would be too late for the post. If you do not hear from me again immediately, you will be sure that this *bourrasque* has subsided.

Thursday, 8th.

I am exceedingly vexed. I sent this letter to Berkeley Square on Tuesday, but by the present confusions my servant did not receive it in time. I came myself yesterday, and found a horrible scene. Lord Mansfield's house[6] was just burnt down, and at night there were shocking disorders. London and Southwark were on fire in six places; but the regular troops quelled the sedition by daybreak, and everything now is quiet. A camp of ten thousand men is formed in Hyde Park, and regiments of horse and foot arrive every hour.

Friday morn, 9th.

All has been quiet to-night. I am going to Strawberry for a little rest. Your nephew told me last night that he sends you constant journals just now.

[5] A Roman Catholic chapel in Ropemaker's Alley, Moorfields, was gutted by the mob on Sunday, June 4.

[6] In Bloomsbury Square. Lord Mansfield and his wife barely escaped by a back door. All the Earl's books and MSS. were destroyed and dispersed.

2057. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 6, 1780.

You will think me amazingly callous to politics, Madam, when you see my date is from the country. In truth I came hither on Sunday to avoid the Birthday; and stay, because Mr. Hindley's house is again to be sold by auction in half an hour; and, if one ever is to have a tranquil moment again, it is very important to know who is to be my Ucalegon, and live at next door. I write a few lines, because I have this instant received two letters at once from your Ladyship, and must thank you for the old protest, which has contracted the hue of a MS., and to answer a few of your questions, or to tell you that I am not qualified to satisfy them.

I know no more of Saint George Gordon, but that I would change his last name into Cordon, and baptize him with a halter. We have reports here of some continuance of riots, but of late I credit nothing till after two or three rebounds. All I gleaned more of the tumult on Friday was, that the Archbishop of York, who was above stairs, in a committee, hearing of Lord Mansfield's danger, flew down, rushed through the crowd, and carried off his friend in Abraham's bosom. The Duke of Richmond told me this with great approbation. A Mr. Holroyd[1], a member, told the Gordon that he ought to be sent to Bedlam, but that he himself would not quit him a moment, sat by him, followed him up into the gallery, and, in short, prevented his further addresses to the mob.

You ask about Mr. Selwyn: have you heard his incom-

Letter 2057.—[1] John Baker Holroyd (d. 1821), of Sheffield Place, near Uckfield, Sussex; M.P. for Coventry; cr. (Jan. 9, 1781) Baron Sheffield, of Dunamore, county Meath; cr. Earl of Sheffield, 1816. He was the friend and correspondent of Gibbon.

parable reply to Lord George Gordon, who asked him if he would choose him again for Luggershall? He replied, 'His constituents would not.' 'Oh, yes; if you would recommend me, they would choose me if I came from the coast of Africa.' 'That is according to what part of the coast you came from: they would certainly, if you came from the Guinea coast.' Now, Madam, is not this true inspiration as well as true wit? Had one asked him in which of the four quarters of the world Guinea is situated, could he have told?

I knew nothing of my nephew Cholmondeley's lending or dismissing his encumbrances. I shall rejoice in both. I do not allow that there was anything execrable in the play but the actors. I was charmed with both prologue and epilogue, and with the delivery of both. I have read neither, but liked the latter full as well as the former. I may change my opinion on examining them.

I do believe there is some truth in Miss K.'s story. I know no more of the haggle between Lady J. and your cousin Duke, nor a syllable of her daughter, not even who the baronet is. In fact, I do not look at all after the next generation and their valentines, except my own tribe, and they are so numerous, and there have been so many *contre-temps* about them, that I abstract my attention as much as I can, and leave the private as well as the public to chance, who at least has some decision, which I see in nobody else.

We had an exceedingly pretty firework last night on the bank of the Thames, at that most beautiful of all spots that was Mr. Giles's, and is now one Franco's, a Jew, who gave the entertainment in honour of the day. I carried Lady Browne thither; my horses were frightened at the rockets, and we stepped out of the chaise and stood by the river till we were blighted by the east wind, and smothered by the smoke; for our *freeborn weather*, that on Monday and Friday

was as hot as Lord George, is now as cold as the Duke of Devonshire.

I shall go to town to-morrow, and you see, Madam, do not decline my duty, when I have a word to say; but not having a grain of penetration, I did apprehend my summer letters would be very barren. I have been so far wise, that I never would embark in anything that made it expedient to maintain a character, which is a horrid burthen on an Englishman. I may mistake and guess wrong, and change my mind, or talk nonsense, with impunity. I shall not be thought more trifling than usual. And is not it some comfort not to be the worse for wear?

2058. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Wednesday, five o'clock, June 7, 1780.

I am heartily glad I am come to town, though never was a less delicious place; but there was no bearing to remain philosophically in the country, and hear the thousand rumours of every hour, and not know whether one's friends and relations were not destroyed. Yesterday Newgate was burnt, and other houses, and Lord Sandwich near massacred. At Hyde Park Corner I saw Guards at the Lord President's[1] door, and in Piccadilly met George[2] and the Signorina[3], whom I wondered he ventured there. He came into my chaise in a fury, and told me Lord Mansfield's house is in ashes, and that five thousand men were marched to Caen Wood[4]—it is true, and that one thousand of the Guards are gone after them. A camp of ten thousand is forming in Hyde Park as fast as possible, and the Berkshire militia is just arrived. Wedderburn and Lord Stormont are

Letter 2058.—[1] Earl Bathurst, who lived at Apsley House.
[2] George Selwyn.
[3] Maria Fagniani.
[4] Lord Mansfield's house at Highgate.

threatened, and I do not know who. The Duchess of Beaufort[5] sent an hour ago to tell me Lord Ashburnham had just advertised her that he is threatened, and was sending away his poor bedridden Countess and children; and the Duchess begged to know what I proposed to do. I immediately went to her, and quieted her, and assured her we are as safe as we can be anywhere, and as little obnoxious; but if she was alarmed, I advised her to remove to Notting Hill, where Lady Mary[6] is absent. The Duchess said the mob were now in Saville Row; we sent thither, and so they are, round Colonel Woodford's, who gave the Guards orders to fire at Lord Mansfield's, where six at least of the rioters were killed.

The mob are now armed, having seized the stores in the Artillery Ground.

If anything can surprise your Ladyship, it will be what I am going to tell you. Lord George Gordon went to Buckingham House this morning, and asked an audience of the King. Can you be more surprised still?—He was refused.

I must finish, for I am going about the town to learn, and see, and hear. Caen Wood is saved; a regiment on march met the rioters.

It will probably be a black night: I am decking myself with blue ribbons like a May-day garland. Horsemen are riding by with muskets. I am sorry I did not bring the armour of Francis I to town, as I am to guard a Duchess Dowager and an heiress[7]. Will it not be romantically generous if I yield the latter to my nephew?

From my garrison in Berkeley Square.

[5] Elizabeth Berkeley, Dowager Duchess of Beaufort.

[6] Lady Mary Coke, whose country house was at Notting Hill.

[7] Lady Elizabeth Compton (d. 1835), only daughter and heiress of seventh Earl of Northampton; m. (1782) Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish (afterwards Earl of Burlington), third son of fourth Duke of Devonshire. She was grand-daughter of the Duchess of Beaufort.

P.S. The pious insurgents will soon have a military chest. They took forty-five guineas from Charles Turner yesterday.

2059. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Wednesday night, past two in the morning,
June 7, 1780.

As it is impossible to go to bed (for Lady Betty Compton has hoped I would not this very minute, which, next to her asking the contrary, is the thing not to be refused), I cannot be better employed than in proving how much I think of your Ladyship at the most horrible moment I ever saw. You shall judge.

I was at Gloucester House between nine and ten. The servants announced a great fire; the Duchess, her daughters, and I went to the top of the house, and beheld not only one but two vast fires, which we took for the King's Bench and Lambeth; but the latter was the New Prison, and the former at least was burning at midnight. Colonel Heywood came in and acquainted his Royal Highness that nine houses in Great Queen Street had been gutted, and the furniture burnt; and he had *seen* a great Catholic distiller's[1] at Holborn Bridge broken open and all the casks staved; and since, the house has been set on fire.

At ten I went to Lord Hertford's, and found him and his sons charging muskets. Lord Rockingham has two hundred soldiers in his house, and is determined to defend it. Thence I went to General Conway's[2], and in a moment a servant came in and said there was a great fire just by. We went to the street-door and thought it was St. Martin's Lane in flames, but it is either the Fleet Prison or the distiller's.

Letter 2059.—[1] A Mr. Langdale.
[2] In Warwick Street, Charing Cross.

I forgot that in the court of Gloucester House I met Colonel Jennings, who told me there had been an engagement at the Royal Exchange to defend the Bank, and that the Guards had shot sixty of the mob; I have since heard seventy, for I forgot to tell your Ladyship that at a *great* Council, held this evening at the Queen's House, at which Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Portland were present, military execution was ordered, for, in truth, the Justices dare not act.

After supper I returned to Lady Hertford, finding Charing Cross, and the Haymarket, and Piccadilly, illuminated from fear, though all this end of the town is hitherto perfectly quiet, lines being drawn 'cross the Strand and Holborn, to prevent the mob coming westward. Henry and William Conway[3] arrived, and had seen the populace break open the toll-houses on Blackfriars Bridge, and carry off bushels of halfpence, which fell about the streets, and then they set fire to the toll-houses. General Conway's porter has seen five distinct conflagrations.

Lady Hertford's cook came in, white as this paper. *He is a German Protestant.* He said his house had been attacked, his furniture burnt; that he had saved one child, and left another with his wife, whom he could not get out; and that not above ten or twelve persons had assaulted his house. I could not credit this, at least was sure it was an episode that had no connection with the general insurrection, and was at most some pique of his neighbours. I sent my own footman to the spot in Woodstock Street; he brought me word there had been eight or ten apprentices who made the riot, that two Life Guardsmen had arrived and secured four of the enemies. It seems the cook had refused to illuminate like the rest of the street. To-morrow, I suppose, his Majesty King George Gordon will order their release;

[3] Second and sixth sons of the Earl of Hertford.

they will be inflated with having been confessors, and turn heroes.

On coming home I visited the Duchess Dowager and my fair ward; and am heartily tired with so many expeditions, for which I little imagined I had youth enough left.

We expect three or four more regiments to-morrow, besides some troops of horse and militia already arrived. We are menaced with counter-squadrons from the country. There will, I fear, be much blood spilt before peace is restored. The Gordon has already surpassed Masaniello, who I do not remember set his own capital on fire. Yet I assure your Ladyship there is no panic. Lady Aylesbury has been at the play in the Haymarket, and the Duke[4] and my four nieces at Ranelagh, this evening. For my part, I think the *common* diversions of these last four-and-twenty hours are sufficient to content any moderate appetite; and as it is now three in the morning, I shall wish you good night, and try to get a little sleep myself, if Lord George Macbeth has not murdered it all. I own I shall not soon forget the sight I saw from the top of Gloucester House!

Thursday morning, after breakfast.

I do not know whether to call the horrors of the night greater or less than I thought. My printer, who has been out all night, and on the spots of action, says, not above a dozen were killed at the Royal Exchange, some few elsewhere; at the King's Bench, he does not know how many; but in other respects the calamities are dreadful. He saw many houses set on fire, women and children screaming, running out of doors with what they could save, and knocking one another down with their loads in the confusion. Barnard's Inn is burnt, and some houses, mistaken

[4] The Duke of Gloucester.

for Catholic. Kirgate says most of the rioters are apprentices, and plunder and drink have been their chief objects, and both women and men are still lying dead drunk about the streets: brandy is preferable to enthusiasm. I trust many more troops will arrive to-day. What families ruined! What wretched wives and mothers! What public disgrace! —ay! and where, and when, and how will all this confusion end! and what shall we be when it is concluded? I remember the Excise and the Gin Act, and the rebels at Derby, and Wilkes's interlude, and the French at Plymouth; or I should have a very bad memory; but I never till last night saw London and Southwark in flames!

After dinner.

It is a moment, Madam, when to be surprised is not surprising. But what will you say to the House of Commons meeting by twelve o'clock to-day, and adjourning ere fifty members were arrived, to Monday se'nnight! So adieu all government but the sword!

Will your Ladyship give me credit when I heap contradictions on absurdities—will you believe such confusion and calamities, and yet think there is no consternation? Well, only hear. My niece, Mrs. Keppel, with her three daughters, drove since noon over Westminster Bridge, through St. George's Fields, where the King's Bench is smoking, over London Bridge, passed the Bank, and came the whole length of the City! They have been here, and say the people *look* very unquiet; but can one imagine that they would be smiling? Old Lady Albemarle, who followed me in few minutes from Gloucester House, was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall, between ten and eleven, by a horseman. Sparrow, one of the delivered convicts, who was to have been hanged this morning, is said to have been shot yesterday as he was spiriting up the rioters. Kirgate has just heard in the Park, that the Protestant

Association disavow the seditious, and will take up arms against them. If we are saved, it will be so as by fire.

I shall return to my own castle to-morrow: I had not above four hours' sleep last night, and must get some rest. General Conway is enraged at the adjournment, and will go away too. Many coaches and chaises did leave London yesterday. My intelligence will not be so good nor so immediate; but you will not want correspondents. Disturbances are threatened again for to-night; and some probably will happen, but there are more troops and less alacrity in the outlaws.

2060. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 9, at noon, 1780.

All has been quiet to-night as far as we know in this region; but not without blood being spilt yesterday. The rioters attacked the Horse Guards about six in Fleet Street, and, not giving them time to load, were repelled by the bayonet. Twenty fell, thirty-five were wounded and sent to the hospital, where two died directly. Three of the Guards were wounded, and a young officer named Marjoribank. Mr. Conway's footman told me he was on a message at Lord Amherst's when the Guards returned, and that their bayonets were steeped in blood.

I heard, too, at my neighbour Duchess's, whither I went at one in the morning, that the Protestant Associators, disguised with blue cockades as friends, had fallen on the rioters in St. George's Fields, and killed many. I do not warrant the truth, but I did hear often in the evening that there had been slaughter in the Borough, where a great public-house had been destroyed, and a house at Redriffe, and another at Islington. Zeal has entirely thrown off the mask and owned its name—plunder. Its offspring have

extorted money from several houses with threats of firing them as Catholic. Apprentices and Irish chairmen, and all kinds of outlaws, have been the most active. Some hundreds are actually dead about the streets, with the spirits they plundered at the distiller's; the low women knelt and sucked them as they ran from the staved casks.

It was reported last night that the primate, George Gordon, is fled to Scotland[1]: for aught I know he may not be so far off as Grosvenor Place. All is rumour and exaggeration; and yet it would be difficult to exaggerate the horrors of Wednesday night; a town taken by storm could alone exceed them.

I am going to Strawberry this instant, exhausted with fatigue, for I have certainly been on my feet longer these last eight-and-forty hours than in forty days before. I forgot to tell your Ladyship that as I came to town I saw in chalk on a hack at Hammersmith, 'God blast the Pope,'—now the soldiers tear away blue cockades—and, when I return next, I expect to read on the walls, '*De par le Roi, Régiment de Picardie.*'

Adieu! Madam; allow my pen a few holidays, unless the storm recommences.

2061. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, June 9, at night, 1780.

I have not had a moment's time, or one calm enough, to write you a single line, and now am not only fatigued, but know not where to begin, or how to arrange the thousand things I have in my mind. If I am incoherent, you must excuse it, and accept whatever presents itself.

I could not bear to sit here in shameful selfish philosophy,

Letter 2060.—[1] Gordon was arrested at his own house in Welbeck Street on June 9, 1780.

and hear the million of reports, and know almost all I loved in danger, without sharing it. I went to town on Wednesday, and though the night was the most horrible I ever beheld, I would not take millions not to have been present; and should I have seen the conflagration, as I must from these windows, I should have been distracted for my friends.

At nine at night, on notice of fire, I went with the Duchess and her daughters to the top of Gloucester House, and thence beheld the King's Bench, which was a little town, and at a distance the New Prison, in flames. At past ten I went to General Conway's: in a moment we were alarmed by the servants, and rushing to the street-door saw through Little Warwick Street such an universal blaze, that I had no doubt the Mews, at least St. Martin's Lane, was on fire. Mr. Conway ran, and I limped after him, to Charing Cross, but, though seemingly close, it was no nearer than the Fleet Market.

At past twelve I went up to Lord Hertford's: two of his sons came in from the bridge at Blackfriars, where they had seen the toll-houses plundered and burnt. Instantly arrived their cook, a German Protestant, with a child in his arms, and all we could gather was that the mob was in possession of his house, had burnt his furniture, and had obliged him to abandon his wife and another child. I sent my own footman, for it was only in Woodstock Street, and he soon returned and said it had been only some apprentices who supposed him a Papist on his not illuminating his house, and that three of them and an Irish Catholic chairman had been secured, but the poor man has lost his all! I drove from one place to another till two, but did not go to bed till between three and four, and ere asleep heard a troop of horse gallop by. My printer, whom I had sent out for intelligence, came not home till past nine the next

morning: I feared he was killed, but then I heard of such a scene. He had beheld three sides of the Fleet Market in flames, Barnard's Inn at one end, the prison on one side and the distiller's on the other, besides Fetter and Shoe Lanes, with such horrors of distraction, distress, &c., as are not to be described; besides accounts of slaughter near the Bank. The engines were cut to pieces, and a dozen or fourteen different parts were burning. It is incredible that so few houses and buildings in comparison are in ashes. The papers must tell you other details, and of what preceded the total demolition of Lord Mansfield's, &c.

Yesterday was some slaughter in Fleet Street by the Horse Guards, and more in St. George's Fields by the Protestant Association, who fell on the rioters, who appear to have been chiefly apprentices, convicts, and all kinds of desperadoes; for Popery is already out of the question, and plunder all the object. They have exacted sums from many houses to avoid being burnt as Popish. The ringleader Lord George is fled. The Bank, the destruction of all prisons and of the Inns of Court, were the principal aims.

The magistrates, intimidated by demolition of Fielding's and Justice Hyde's houses, did not dare to act. A general Council was summoned at Buckingham House, at which the twelve Judges attended. It was determined not to shut up the courts but to order military execution. Both Houses are adjourned to Monday sevennight, which hurt General Conway so much, who intended yesterday to move for the repeal of the toleration, and found the House adjourned before he could get to it, though early, that he is gone out of town.

The night passed quietly, and by this evening there will be eighteen thousand men in and round the town. As yet there are more persons killed by drinking than by ball or bayonet. At the great Popish distiller's they swallowed

spirits of all kinds, and Kirgate saw men and women lying dead in the streets under barrows as he came home yesterday.

We have now, superabundantly, to fear robbery: 300 desperate villains were released from Newgate. Lady Albemarle was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall at twelve at night. Baron D'Aguilar's[1] coach was shot at here last night, close to the Crown.

I have so much exerted my no strength, and had so little sleep these two nights, that I came hither to-day for some rest. It will be but *grim repose.* It is said that this insurrection was expected in France a month ago. Just as I came away Mr. Griffith told me the French were embarking. In short, what may not be expected? Then one turns from what is to come, to helpless misery, that will soon be forgotten but by the sufferers; whole families ruined, wives that tried to drag their husbands out of the mobs and have found them breathless, the terrors of the Catholics, indeed of all foreigners, but one. That Scythian heroine, the Princess Daskiou, is here; her natural brother Woronzow[2] was taken in Monsieur Cordon's chapel, and was reclaimed by Simonin[3], and released. *She* herself on Wednesday, I *know,* sent Lord Ashburnham word that his house was marked for destruction[4]. Merciful tigress! it is proof he is not an Emperor.

My bosom, I think, does not want humanity, yet I cannot feel pity for Lord Mansfield. I did feel joy for the four convicts who were released from Newgate within twenty-four hours of their execution; but ought not a man to be taught sensibility, who drove us 'cross the Rubicon? I

Letter 2061.—[1] Ephraim Lopes Pereira (d. 1802), Baron d'Aguilar, a Jew. He had a country house at Twickenham.

[2] Hitherto printed 'Rantzau.'

[3] The Russian Ambassador.

[4] Her brother probably learned the plans of the mob, and communicated them to her.

would not hurt a hair of his head: but if I sigh for the afflicted innocent, can I blend him with them?

You will call me fool in your own mind, and tell yourself that a week ago I announced that national lethargy would doze into despotism. I have long known how short-sighted my penetration is. I allow all you can think of my littleness of mind. However, I would not change a mean understanding or a want of spirit for anything I hold to be wrong, nor think, I beg you, that by that assertion I pretend to any goodness. I am often guilty, but it is not with tranquillity, nor from my soul being steeled against remorse. Still less do I condemn others who act what they think right, or doubt the soundness of the principles of my friends. On the contrary, I honour those who have more firmness than myself; yet in the most quiet times my opinion was exactly what it is now. Many years ago I shocked Mrs. Macaulay by telling her, that had I been Luther and could have foreseen the woes I should occasion, I should have asked myself, whether I was authorized to cause the deaths of three or four hundred thousand persons, that future millions might be advantaged. The Spartan matron despised my scruples.

Well! confusion is trumps! One only thing I anxiously beg, do not think ill of your friends; I don't mean myself—I am of no consequence, but be assured that you will love even Lord Rockingham when I can tell you something that I cannot write. If I live to see you again,—but ifs are the subterfuges of those that cannot support present unhappiness; whoever can descry connection between *this* instant and anything that is to come, is the *maximus* of all Apollos. Adieu!

Saturday morning.

I have this moment received two letters from town to tell me that Lord George Gordon was overtaken in his flight to Scotland, and was just brought prisoner to the Horse Guards.

This is all I know yet, except that some say he was seized in the Park, and was not fled.

Wait for the echo.

2062. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday night, late.

Was not I cruelly out of luck, Madam, to have been fishing in troubled waters for two days for your Ladyship's entertainment, and to have come away very few hours before the great pike was hooked? Well, to drop metaphor, here are Garth's lines reversed,

> Thus little villains oft submit to fate,
> That great ones may enjoy the world in state.

Four convicts on the eve of execution are let loose from Newgate, and Lord George Gordon is sent to the Tower. If he is hanged, the old couplet will recover its credit, for Mr. Wedderburn is Chief Justice[1].

I flatter myself I shall receive a line from your Ladyship to-morrow morning: I am impatient to hear what you think of *Black Wednesday*. I know how much you must have been shocked, but I long to read your own expressions; when you answer, then one is conversing. My sensations are very different from what they were. While in the thick of the conflagration, I was all indignation and a thousand passions. Last night, when sitting silently alone, horror rose as I cooled; and grief succeeded, and then all kinds of gloomy presages. For some time people have said, 'Where will all this end?' I as often replied, 'Where will it begin?' It is now begun, with a dreadful overture; and I tremble to think what the chorus may be! The sword reigns at present, and saved the capital! What is to depose the sword?—Is

Letter 2062.—[1] He was appointed Lord Chief Justice on June 9, and was created Baron Loughborough on June 14, 1780.

it not to be feared, on the other hand, that other swords may be lifted up?—What probability that everything will subside quietly into the natural channel?—Nay, how narrow will that channel be, whenever the prospect is cleared by peace? What a dismal fragment of an empire! yet would that moment were come when we are to take a survey of our ruins! That moment I probably shall not see. When I rose this morning, I found the exertions I had made with such puny powers had been far beyond what I could bear; I was too sick to go on with dressing myself. This evening I have been abroad, and you shall hear no more of it. I have been with Lady Di at Richmond, where I found Lady Pembroke, Miss Herbert, and Mr. Brudenell. Lord Herbert[2] is arrived. They told me the melancholy position of Lady Westmorland[3]. She is sister of Lord George Gordon, and wife of Colonel Woodford, who is forced to conceal himself, having been the first officer who gave orders to the soldiers to fire, on the attack of Lord Mansfield's house. How many still more deplorable calamities from the tragedy of this week that one shall never hear of! I will change my style, and, like an epilogue after a moving piece, divert you with a *bon mot* of George Selwyn. He came to me yesterday morning from Lady Townshend, who, terrified by the fires of the preceding night, talked the language of the court, instead of opposition. He said she put him in mind of removed tradesmen, who hang out a board with, 'Burnt out from over the way.' Good night, Madam, till I receive your letter.

Monday morning, the 12th.

Disappointed! disappointed! not a line from your Lady-

[2] George Augustus Herbert (1759–1827), Lord Herbert, only son of tenth Earl of Pembroke, whom he succeeded in 1794.

[3] Lady Susan Gordon, eldest daughter of third Duke of Gordon; m. 1. (1767) John Fane, ninth Earl of Westmorland; 2. (1778) John Woodford, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st Foot Guards; d. 1814.

ship; I will not send away this till I hear from you. Last night, at Hampton Court, I heard of two Popish chapels demolished at Bath, and one at Bristol. My coachman has just been in Twickenham, and says half Bath is burnt; I trust this is but the natural progress of lies, that increase like a chairman's legs by walking. Mercy on us! we seem to be plunging into the horrors of France in the reigns of Charles VI and VII!—yet, as extremes meet, there is at this moment amazing insensibility. Within these four days I have received five applications for tickets to see my house! One from a set of company who fled from town to avoid the tumults and fires. I suppose Æneas lost Creüsa by her stopping at Sadler's Wells.

13th.

The letter I have this moment received is so kind, Madam, that it effaces all disappointment. Indeed, my impatience made me forget that no post comes in here on Mondays. To-day's letters from town mention no disturbance at Bristol or anywhere else. Every day gained is considerable, at least will be so when there has been time for the history of last week to have spread, and intelligence from the distant counties to be returned. All I have heard to-day is of some alteration to be made to the Riot Act, that Lord George cannot be tried this month, and that the King will go to the House on Monday. I will now answer what is necessary in your Ladyship's and take my leave, for, as you observe, the post arrives late, and I have other letters that I must answer. Mr. Williams interrupted me, and has added a curious anecdote,—and a horrible one, to my collection of the late events. One project of the diabolical incendiaries was to let loose the lions in the Tower, and the lunatics in Bedlam. The latter might be from a fellow feeling in Lord George, but cannibals do not invite wild beasts to their banquets. The Princess Daskiou will

certainly communicate the thought to her mistress and accomplice, the legislatress of Russia.

George, I think, need not fear Mimy's being reclaimed: when parents can give up a child, I have no notion of their caring what becomes of it.

My cousin, the Miss Townshend whom your Ladyship mentions, is quite a stranger to me. My nephews, nieces, and cousins compose such a clan, that, with all my genealogic propensities, I never saw all of them, though it seems this young lady is one who, according to the proverb, knows Jack Pudding. She shall certainly command a ticket for Strawberry, and I actually enclose one; but when you talk of enthusiasm, Madam, it is impossible to make an acquaintance on that ground; it would be Jackpudding-ing myself in good earnest.

I do not know whether I am glad or sorry that you must remove from Grosvenor Place. That will depend on your future habitation; but I must finish, and would, if I dared, return the *Dearest*—but there would be a *soupçon* of the Jack Pudding in that too, and therefore I don't.

P.S. I like an ironic sentence in yesterday's *London Courant*, which says all our grievances are *red-dressed*.

2063. To Earl Harcourt.

My dear Lord, Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1780.

If confusion and every horror are excuses, your Lordship will forgive my not thanking you sooner, as I intended, for the very kind message and invitation you were so good as to leave at my house. I did drive to yours in total ignorance of what was passing, at the very instant you were in such danger in the House of Lords. Thank God! your Lordship and all my friends escaped massacre!

It was my plan, a week ago, to go to Malvern the beginning of July, and to wait [on] your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, going or coming, as should be least inconvenient to you. One must have the confidence of a true enthusiast or a false one to say what one will do three weeks hence! *I will!* is no longer a phrase in the now narrow vocabulary of an Englishman. Two days ago the mob, to-day the army,—to-morrow who were, are, will be our masters?

Exhausted with fatigue and watching, I came from town yesterday at two o'clock, to seek a little repose, leaving a fierce calm. Since the early part of Thursday evening, I have not heard of any disturbance; and whether terrified like a brat that has set his frock on fire, or to evoke new legions, *Scoticè* clans, of infernals, the Gordon is fled.

Wednesday no mortal pen can describe, that has not seen a city taken by storm; yet who ever saw a capital of the size of London in flames in more than a dozen places, and its own inhabitants rioting in every barbarity? How it escaped a wide conflagration is incomprehensible, and that not threescore lives were lost that night is equally amazing. Treble that number or more were dead by morning by wallowing in the casks of spirits they had staved. I do not exaggerate, my Lord; they sucked them as they flowed about the streets.

Yesterday was more bloody, yet not excessively; though the army was let loose, and it was merciful to the frantic wretches themselves, who seem to be awed. As men recover from their consternation, they begin to arm for common safety. Zeal soon threw away the mask, and, like Spanish missionaries in Mexico, aimed at nothing but gold. Lady Albemarle was robbed by a horseman on that identical Wednesday night at Mrs. Keppel's door. *The Duke* [1], wrapped in a great-coat, and in a hackney coach, was surrounded

Letter 2063.—[1] The Duke of Gloucester.

by the mob in the Fleet Market, and obliged to give them his purse.

How poor a sketch have I given your Lordship of what Guicciardini would have formed a folio! yet we would forget the wretched wives and mothers that will rue that night, and expatiate on the precious manuscripts burnt in Bloomsbury[2]; yet already can I look with more tranquillity backward, than to what is to come. However, one may foresee too much; as one could not foresee what has happened, conjectures are idle, and I will release your Lordship.

Mrs. Mestivyer[3] is a good deal better, and I think not immediately going. If there is any such thing as gratitude, I am most truly

Your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's
Devoted, humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

One o'clock, at noon.

The post is just come in: I have two letters to confirm what I heard half an hour ago, that Lord George Gordon was overtaken in his flight to Scotland by a party of Light Horse, and brought prisoner to the Horse Guards. This is all I will warrant; for there are twenty different reports already, which there must be at least where one is twenty miles from town. I will still less conjecture or reason, for I do not often guess rightly, and one argues yet worse but on the most certain grounds.

[2] The MSS. of Lord Mansfield.
[3] A sister of Mrs. Clive, who lived with her at Little Strawberry Hill.

2064. To Mrs. Abington.

Madam, Strawberry Hill, June 11, 1780.

You may certainly always command me and my house. My common custom is to give a ticket for only four persons at a time; but it would be very insolent in me, when all laws are set at nought, to pretend to prescribe rules. At such times there is a shadow of authority in setting the laws aside by the legislature itself; and though I have no army to supply their place, I declare Mrs. Abington may march through all my dominions at the head of as large a troop as she pleases—I do not say, as she can muster and command, for then I am sure my house would not hold them. The day, too, is at her own choice; and the master is her very obedient humble servant,

Hor. Walpole.

2065. To the Earl of Strafford.

My dear Lord, Strawberry Hill, June 12, 1780.

If the late events had been within the common proportion of news, I would have tried to entertain your Lordship with an account of them; but they were far beyond that size, and could only create horror and indignation. Religion has often been the cloak of injustice, outrage, and villainy: in our late tumults it scarce kept on its mask a moment; its persecution was downright robbery; and it was so drunk, that it killed its banditti faster than they could plunder. The tumults have been carried on in so violent and scandalous a manner, that I trust they will have no copies. When prisons are levelled to the ground, when the Bank is aimed at, and reformation is attempted by conflagrations, the savages of Canada are the only fit allies of

Lord George Gordon and his crew. The Tower is much too dignified a prison for him—but he had left no other.

I came out of town on Friday, having seen a good deal of the shocking transactions of Wednesday night—in fact, it was difficult to be in London, and not see or think some part of it in flames. I saw those of the King's Bench, New Prison, and those on the three sides of the Fleet Market, which united into one blaze. The town and Parks are now one camp—the next disagreeable sight to the capital being in ashes. It will still not have been a fatal tragedy, if it brings the nation *one* and all to their senses. It will still be not quite an unhappy country, if we reflect that the old constitution, exactly as it was in the last reign, was the most desirable of any in the universe. It made us *then* the first people in Europe—we have a vast deal of ground to recover—but can we take a better path than that which King William pointed out to us? I mean the system he left us at the Revolution. I am averse to *all* changes of it—it fitted us just as it was.

For some time even individuals must be upon their guard. Our new and now imprisoned apostle has delivered so many congenial Saint Peters from gaol, that one hears of nothing but robberies on the highway. Your Lordship's sister[1], Lady Browne, and I have been at Twickenham Park this evening, and kept together, and had a horseman at our return. Baron d'Aguilar was shot at in that very lane on Thursday night. A troop of the fugitives had rendezvoused in Combe Wood[2], and were dislodged thence yesterday by the Light Horse.

I do not know a syllable but what relates to these disturbances. The newspapers have neglected few truths. Lies, without their natural propensity to falsehoods, they

LETTER 2065.—[1] Lady Anne Conolly.
[2] Near Kingston-on-Thames.

could not avoid, for every minute produces some, at least exaggerations. We were threatened with swarms of good Protestants *à brûler* from all quarters, and report sent various detachments from the metropolis on similar errands; but, thank God, they have been but reports! Oh, when shall we have peace and tranquillity? I hope your Lordship and Lady Strafford will at least enjoy the latter in your charming woods. I have long doubted which of our passions is the strongest—perhaps every one of them is equally strong in some person or other—but I have no doubt but ambition is the most detestable, and the most inexcusable; for its mischiefs are by far the most extensive, and its enjoyments by no means proportioned to its anxieties. The latter, I believe, is the case of most passions—but then all but ambition cost little pain to any but the possessor. An ambitious man must be divested of all feeling but for himself. The torment of others is his high road to happiness. Were the transmigration of souls true, and accompanied by consciousness, how delighted would Alexander or Crœsus be to find themselves on four legs, and divested of a wish to conquer new worlds, or to heap up all the wealth of this! Adieu, my dear Lord!

I am most gratefully your Lordship's
Obedient humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

2066. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1780.

The Pope needs not be alarmed: the rioters thought much more of plundering those of their own communion, than his Holiness's flock. To demolish law and prisons was their next great object; and to release prisoners, the only gospel-work they performed. What was the view of the

arch-incendiary I do not know, nor what seditious plans were engrafted on or incorporated with his Calvinistic reformation; but it is certain that the number of the perpetrators of all the mischief was very inconsiderable, and two-thirds apprentices and women. Two fortunate circumstances are amazing: that a large portion of the town was not burnt, and that not a single person of any name is killed. The damage, on the contrary, is estimated at a million. I do not send you particulars, for your nephew told me you should have a journal of them from him.

The spectacle—for I was there on the blackest night, the Wednesday—was tremendous and shocking. The monster that conjured up this tempest is now manacled in the Tower.—But what a nation is Scotland; in every reign engendering traitors to the state, and false and pernicious to the kings that favour it the most! National prejudices, I know, are very vulgar; but, if there are national characteristics, can one but dislike the soils and climates that concur to produce them?

I shall suspend the prosecution of this letter, for the papers say our ports are still shut. They will soon be reopened, I trust; for tranquillity is restored in the capital, and in the country has not been disturbed but for one moment at Bath, though near a fortnight is elapsed since the first tumult.

Berkeley Square, Friday, 16th.

I shall change my mind, and send away this fragment to-night; as, though short, it will contain two pieces of intelligence that will give you joy, and I doubt you want some cordials.

Yesterday arrived an account of the surrender of Charleston to Sir Henry Clinton: like the jaundice, I turn everything to the colour of my mind, and cry, 'Will it advance peace?'

It certainly will have good effect here, and discourage mutineers.—I have not time to dilate more.

The King and his royal brothers[1] are reconciled. This is my second good article.—But the best of all is that we are perfectly tranquil; and ten days having passed since even the *Black Wednesday*, and no accounts having come of the least disturbance, except a momentary one at Bath, it is fairly to be presumed that the whole nation is shocked at the late savage tumults.

Here the scandal taken is so universal, or shame, or fear, that not a single person has been or sent to inquire after the arch-incendiary. Wilkes has very sensibly ridden home on Lord George, and distinguished himself by zeal and spirit.

One strange circumstance in the late delirium was the mixture of rage and consideration in the mob. In most of the fires they threw furniture into the street, did not burn it *in* the houses; nay, made several small bonfires lest a large one should spread to buildings. They would not suffer engines to play on the devoted edifices; yet, the moment the objects were consumed, played the engines on contiguous houses on each side! It is all unaccountable, and I can yet send you no consistent narrative. Much appears to have been sudden fury, and in many places the act of few. In other lights it looks like plan and deep premeditation. Whether it will ever be unravelled, I know not; or whether, like the history of darker ages, falsehood will become history, and then distant periods conjecture that we have transmitted very blundered relations: but, when I know so little of what has passed before my own eyes, I shall not guess how posterity will form their opinions. Adieu! I have not time to say more.

LETTER 2066.—[1] Prince William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, and Prince Henry, Duke of Cumberland. *Walpole.*

2067. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, June 15, 1780.

You may like to know one is alive, dear Sir, after a massacre, and the conflagration of a capital. I was in it, both on the Friday and on the *Black Wednesday*, the most horrible night I ever beheld, and which, for six hours together, I expected to end in half the town being reduced to ashes.

I can give you little account of the origin of this shocking affair. Negligence was certainly its nurse, and Religion only its godmother. The ostensible author is in the Tower. Twelve or fourteen thousand men have quashed all tumults —and as no bad account is come from the country, except for a moment at Bath, and as eight days have passed, nay, more, since the commencement, I flatter myself the whole nation is shocked at the scene, and that, if plan there was, it was laid only in and for the metropolis. The lowest and most villainous of the people, and to no great amount, were almost the sole actors.

I hope your electioneering riotry has not, nor will mix in these tumults. It would be most absurd, for Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Sir George Saville, and Mr. Burke, the patrons of toleration, were devoted to destruction as much as the ministers. The rails torn from Sir George's house[1] were the chief weapons and instruments of the mob. For the honour of the nation I should be glad to have it proved that the French were the engineers. You and I have lived too long for our comfort—shall we close our eyes in peace?

I will not trouble you more about the arms I sent you:

Letter 2067. —[1] Savile House, in Leicester Fields; it was burnt and plundered on June 4, 1780.

I should like that they were those of the family of Boleyn; and since I cannot be sure they were not, why should not I fancy them so? I revert to the prayer for peace. You and I, that can amuse ourselves with our books and papers, feel as much indignation at the turbulent as they have scorn for us. It is hard at least that they who disturb nobody can have no asylum in which to pursue their innoxious indolence! Who is secure against Jack Straw and a whirlwind? How I abominate Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who routed the poor Otaheitians out of the centre of the ocean, and carried our abominable passions amongst them! Not even that poor little speck could escape European restlessness—Well! I have seen many tempestuous scenes, and outlived them! the present prospect is too thick to see through—it is well hope never forsakes us! Adieu!

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2068. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, June 16, at night.

Depend upon it, Madam, you will always find my conduct simple and void of mystery. I have but two reasons for silence,—ignorance, or from what secrets I know being those of others, not my own. The former was the cause of my not mentioning the reconciliation of the King and his brothers. I knew nothing of it but common report till Tuesday last, when Miss Keppel told me in a postscript that the Duke of Gloucester had asked an audience, and been graciously received. On Thursday the Duchess herself sent me word of it, and desired me to come to town. I came to-day, and have been with her this evening; and when I came away just now, which was past eleven, the Duke was not come back from Kew, where he had been to pass the

evening with the Prince of Wales. Not a word has passed between the brothers about the Duchess. But you may understand that the two Dukes have different ideas, for the Duke of Cumberland was at the Drawing-room yesterday without his Duchess, and the Duke of Gloucester was not. For the command of the army, I believe his Royal Highness expects it no more than I do. This is the naked truth, and which I could not have told you six hours ago: in my last, to have talked vaguely of what I did not know, would really have looked mysterious.

The conquest of Charleston is a great event at the present moment: not a good one if it ensanguines us against peace. I neither understand military details nor love them for that reason. But this success is coupled with a very remarkable event. A Colonel Scott, I think a prisoner, says the Americans are sick of the war, but have been buoyed up by Spanish gold, and by *French promises of the conflagration of London*— a hellish sort of war, but who set the precedent? The court talk much of a plot, and this anecdote is corroborative. Indeed I cannot at all agree with Mr. F.[1] in wishing Lord George Gordon may not be found guilty. He is so black in my eyes already, that though I have infinite compassion for criminals, I never heard of one I should pity less. If he is the source of our being ruled by an army, I shall abhor him still more. Have you heard, Madam, that the common soldiers style one another *your worship*, as being the only Justices of Peace?

I have sent to inquire after Mr. Fox, and hear he is better with great pleasure. General Conway was setting out for Jersey, but the alarm was ill-founded. I know nothing of Lord Beauchamp's deposition against the Lord Mayor, but what I saw in the papers. Mr. Duane[2], I believe, is not

Letter 2068. — [1] Perhaps Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick, brother-in-law of Lady Ossory.

[2] Matthew Duane (1707–1785), a lawyer and antiquary.

yet settled at Twickenham, as the house and court are full of workmen; but I have had no time yet to make my visits, or think of them. Nor have I seen Miss Vernon; nor have I been to the twilights at Bedford House. In truth, I have thought of nothing but that horrible Wednesday and its consequences. Those that I immediately apprehended, insurrections and like tumults in the country, seem, thank God, not likely to ensue. My disorder was merely fatigue and a sick mind. I long to sink into calm stupidity. These tempests brush me up and revive me for a moment, but I had rather wear out quietly with my dowagers of Twickenham at tredrille. This country cannot recover its splendour: it will be for some time the seat of distractions; and, when exhausted, be an insignificant solitude under a Bashaw. I have no loftier wish than to be one of the owls that hoot in an obscure village in the evening and leave desolated cities to vultures and beasts of prey.

2069. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 23, 1780.

I entreat your Ladyship not to suspect yourself of impertinence when you are obliging; nor me of indirect meanings, when I speak plainly. I did see Lord Ossory on Tuesday, and you will find that though I avoided details, my answer was the outline of what had passed. It is a subject on which I never love to write, because, to begin, it has the air of an air which I dislike; and when one answers, one cannot, at every sentence, say, 'Pray don't repeat this'; or, 'This may be repeated.' And yet that is necessary on points that occasion discussion, and on which one does not like to be quoted.

Considering what a crop there is of discordant opinions, and the quantity of matter that enters into head-dresses at

present, it will be very serious, Madam, if the ladies come to pulling caps. The fields of battle will be strewed with strange fragments! but everything seems to be returning to chaos! I am come back to this little nook, in hopes it will escape the general hurly-burly. Lord Ossory agreed with my sentiments more almost than any man I meet with. Mine about this country, I own, are total despair: nor do I see from our present position, our present generation of actors, and from our present enemies, whence aught but ruin should come, either to the nation or constitution, and probably to both,—and if either is undone what signifies the other? The felicity of universal confusion encourages a war within a war; and the attention to the internal one will absorb all regard to the other; and by the time absolute power is attained, it will, like abstract powers, be charming in speculation, but prove to be nothing but the *vis inertiae*. I am weary of such scenes and prospects, and have quitted them. There may, perhaps, be farther combustions; but whether expected or not, we shall affect to expect them, and prepare—not to prevent, but to profit of them; which, I doubt, was a little the case lately. Have you never known a chambermaid, Madam, that would tick at a chandler's shop to the amount of six or seven shillings, rather than part with a favourite crown-piece?

I have got the print of Lady Gertrude[1], but it is poorly executed, and faint and unfinished; however, it is sweetly pretty, though it has not half the countenances of the original. Pray tell me, when you have taken one, where your new house is. Do you really move, like a pawn, only an inch farther in Grosvenor Place?

My hay is cut, and it has rained all day: well, Madam, is it not better to have only annual distresses, than to attend to old Madam England's cancers and amputation of limbs?

Letter 2069.—[1] The second daughter of Lord and Lady Ossory.

I am trying to learn all the doctrines of selfishness, and to care for nothing but my own enjoyments. If it is true that the love of one's country and such virtues are but emanations of self-love, is it not wise to lop them when they no longer flatter one's vanity? In short, to speak with the dignity that becomes every man who prefers himself to all the world, if my country is ever worthy of me I will think on it again! if the prodigal does not return and repent, I will eat the fatted calf by myself.

2070. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1780.

If your Ladyship did not give me themes, I should certainly not think of writing, for I know nothing but what the *Morning Chronicle* said yesterday, and have thought on nothing but my hay, though I have not a load half so big as a lady's head-dress; but the weather is so benevolent, that I sit amongst the reapers till nine at night, and do not wish myself on the parade.

I had heard of Lord Grantham's match[1], and suppose he has contracted some Spanish ideas, and minds blood more than beauty. If the lady ceases to be your neighbour, she will become more your acquaintance. I know no more of the Duchess of Ancaster's misfortunes, and heard before I came out of town that Lady Willoughby[2] was out of danger.

The Princess Daskiou was here this morning with her horde of Tartars, but I kept out of sight, having nothing to

Letter 2070.—[1] Lord Grantham, who had been Ambassador at Madrid, married on Aug. 17, 1780, Lady Mary Jemima Yorke (d. 1830), second daughter and co-heir of second Earl of Hardwicke by the Marchioness Grey. Lord Hardwicke's country seat was Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

[2] Lady Willoughby d'Eresby, daughter of the Duchess of Ancaster.

regale her but one old horse. I have paid my visit to Lord and Lady Sefton, who do not suit me quite so well as poor Lady Blandford.

Have you heard, Madam, that on Lord Effingham's coming to life[3], report has shot old Lord Godolphin? The Monument to be sure would as soon head a riot.

I have deferred my journey to Malvern for a fortnight or three weeks; I shall regret Strawberry less in August; and, besides, have been remarkably well for this last fortnight; and, besides, find it mighty difficult to set about anything, so totally is all my activity gone. I think there is nothing but your Ladyship that has not lost influence over me. You can make me exert even a talent I never had, as I am going to give you a proof. The lines are indifferent enough, but prompt obedience, like charity, can cover a dozen bad verses; and as I scribbled them while the Tartars were in the house, and send them by the return of the post, you may be sure I do not think them fit to be shown, and beg you will not let them go out of your hands. The theme was too good not to be better treated; and what will do in a private letter will not stand criticism, and still less, if taken for a cool design of venting indignation; but here they are, and if they will provoke Mr. Fitzpatrick to write better, you and I shall both be better satisfied.

[3] Thomas Howard (1746–1791), third Earl of Effingham. 'In the riots of '80 the Tories spread the report that the mob was instigated by the Whigs, with a view to bring discredit on the government, and absurd as was the rumour, it gained considerable credit. In confirmation it was asserted that Lord Effingham was killed amongst a body of rioters at Blackfriars Bridge. As he did not appear in London that session he gave strength to the report; at last it was asserted that his body had been found, and that he was recognized by his ruffles; but as he had never been seen with such aristocratic appendages to the wrists, the story at once fell into discredit. In Lord Rockingham's second Administration, Lord Effingham was appointed Treasurer of the Household. . . . His appearance at court caused much merriment, and some Tory remarking upon the coat he wore, Burke replied, "It is the same in which he was killed at the riots."' (*Rockingham Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 407–8.) See also letter to Mason of April 14, 1782.

When mitred masters o'er a groaning land
Extend the Church's all-usurping hand,
No more our woods are ours; our mansions slide
To glut some pontiff's patriarchal pride;
And star-chambers in law's defiance grant
Whate'er the Gospel's appetites can want.
Hence then—nor longer o'er the genial room
Shall Laud's ill-omen'd aspect hurl its gloom.
No tyrant Stuart shall to crosiers give,
And borrow from the gift, prerogative.
Each free-born lord shall his own rights assert,
Nor vassals be enchain'd but by the heart;
While each calm Ossory's benignant smile
Diffuses old good humour round our isle.

Heart and *assert* are bad rhymes, and do not agree in sound or sense, but are like an address that echoes a royal speech with the unfelt protestations of slaves.

Pray send me directions to your camp; do the Infantas make the campaign? The report here is that the Parliament is immediately to be dissolved, in hopes of another phœnix rising out of the ashes of London. In that case I conclude Lady Gertrude will remain at Ampthill to keep open house. The *province* of Bedfordshire I trust will stick close to the house.

2071. To the Rev. William Mason.

June 29, 1780.

Since the great combustion I have not known what to write, nor did Mr. Stonhewer know where you are. I shall prepare this against he sends me word whither to direct it, as he has promised. My opinion of the causes of the late tumults is a very vague one, nor shall I decide till I learn more. Whatever Lord G. Gordon meant, anti-Catholicism seems not only to have had little, but even only a momentary hand in the riots. Some Americans, perhaps, taught by the

lessons we have given them of burning towns, joined in the opportunity; a thousand discontents added others, and all the indigent villains in London seized the opportunity and improved it, not to mention how many concurred from wanton folly without design. The court at first had a mind to bestow a plot on France, Spain, and the Americans, but now seem to abandon that plan. France, solicited by American agents, might, as she used to do when teased by the Jacobites, contribute a little money, a few arms, and some rogues, of whom she was willing to disburthen herself, but I do not imagine it was a branch of her political schemes to burn London. She would have had some force ready to pour in and distract us in some other quarter, while the army should be all drawn to the capital.

I am much more inclined to suppose that a court plot was engrafted early on the prospect of tumults, nay, negative *plots*. I do not believe they intended to have Lord Stormont mobbed, Lord Sandwich almost murdered, nor Lord Mansfield's house destroyed, but Sir George Savile, the Duke of Richmond, and Burke, were more devoted by the zealot part of the mob than any of the Cabinet; so few or such no precautions were taken after such provoking notice had been given by Lord George Gordon, that it is not very injurious to conclude that a necessity for calling the army together to suppress an insurrection was no very disagreeable opportunity.

It has certainly answered so roundly, that I do believe the machinist would forgive the imputation, in consideration of the honour it would do to his policy. Even Lord Mansfield has risen like a phœnix from the flames, and vomits martial law, as if all law books were burnt as well as his own; nay, like *his* plate, almost all party is melted into a mass of bullion loyalty.

This was a moment I have long dreaded! I had no

doubt but the court wished insurrections. It was strong enough *at home* to suppress them, and the suppression would unite *all* the military and militia, and all under one standard, and so I am persuaded it has already.

To complete our destruction there is an universal *anarchy of opinion*; no three men agree on any three propositions. Lord Shelburne and Lord Rockingham are bitter enemies. Burke, who has declared himself educated by an Anabaptist, is mad for toleration. The Duke of Richmond and Charles Fox agree with him on that point, while the Duke is as violent for annual Parliaments as the Rockinghams against them. Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, and the Duke of Grafton are as strongly anti-papistic. The court indeed is as full of dissension; but if interest divides men it reunites them too, which is not the case of opinions; and such a multitude of them has been indiscreetly broached by opposition itself, that while the court keeps steady to two points only, prerogative and the subjugation of America, it may perhaps succeed, at least in the first, before opposition will agree on a single one. The court would carry the other also, I think, if it had the sense to temporize and consent to a tolerable pacification; but having had originally no fund of genuine wisdom, and having squandered foolishly and anticipated all its resources, it will as usual mistake prosperity for means, and blunder away its opportunities under the notion of firmness. France and ten thousand other concurrent impediments will lie still in the way, so that the whole of my reasoning centres in this, that we are in every light undone; that anarchy will reign for some time, and despotism succeed when we are as much ruined by labouring towards it, as we should have been in a few years if it had taken place when first projected.

This is the sketch of my present thoughts: whether consistent with other letters that I have written to you lately,

I cannot remember. I generally judge from the complexion of circumstances, nor do I know a better guide in times when a nation is at its dregs, and the men that do think and act from principle are not only few, but distracted by subdivisions of sentiments, and have no one general system in common. My idea was to adhere to the precise line of the constitution, as a standard of union, and to endeavour to restore it, but that moment is gone, or never was arrived: I see nothing now before me on which to count, except the folly that governs, and which may throw away the advantages it has recovered. That is our sole chance; I have no head for calculating chances, but still less for computing what good may arise out of folly, mischief, and wickedness.

There has been more than one negotiation for partial changes, and on very different foundations. Lord Rockingham at the very moment that the public thought him more than leaning towards the ministers, took the opportunity of reading a very explicit lecture against them in the closet[1]. At this instant (June 23rd) I think it much more likely that the Parliament will be soon dissolved, trusting to the terror spread by the late tumults that none but good Catholics will be returned. The army no doubt will be retained at the head quarters, unless France should call it off, which does not seem probable. Lord Mansfield will have courage to coin what law he pleases, while the House of Lords is guarded by Dragoons; and the Chancellor, whom all sides blindly concur in crying up to the skies, has spirit enough of his own to execute any enterprise to which he shall be commanded; and is as ready as Maupeou to annihilate Parliaments, if timidity and cunning did not prefer *voting* despotism to lay aside votes.

LETTER 2071.—[1] On June 7, 1780, when the riots were at their height, Rockingham was summoned to attend the Privy Council. He asked an audience, and remonstrated strongly with the King on the situation of affairs, which he attributed to the then ministers.

I could expatiate on many particulars of this letter, if we were together. More I shall not know beyond the information of the newspapers, for I shall scarce look at London this summer. One sees there nothing but the royal wish realized, red and blue coats; whoever makes his court makes a campaign. I was not born to be a courtier or a soldier. There is no hope left for an Englishman! one can expect but to be laid prostrate by France or to be enslaved at home; perhaps both, though France does not seem to see all her advantages. We have contributed nine parts in ten to our own ruin; like us she set out with vapouring and has performed as little.

How despicable must both England and France appear to those active monopolizers of usurpation, the sovereigns of Prussia, Russia, and Germany! Spain is still more contemptible, who enters into a quarrel against its will, and is content with beating its head against the rocks of Gibraltar, but France at least has a harvest to come; she cannot have forgotten the treaties of Utrecht and Paris, and never wants a Lord Bolingbroke or a Lord Bute to negotiate for our shame, when she is tired of war. Lord Mansfield no doubt hopes to live to that dear hour, and see Lord Stormont return to Paris to sign our last cession of empire.

June 29, 1780.

I send this letter to town by a servant, and shall beg Mr. Stonhewer to convey it to you by the coach or waggon. I have not heard a syllable of news this week: events must seek me, for I shall not inquire after them, and what signifies writing conjectures or reflections?

2072. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1780.

You had better make haste to Paris, or you will have a ship to freight with commissions. Here are a parcel more that I have this moment received from Madame du Deffand for you—not for yourself, but your friends. Madame de Mirepoix wants two pounds of tea; Madame de Beauvau *trois serrures.* I suppose you know what sort of locks, I don't: and Monsieur de Caraman wants three *serrures* also. I must send Madame du Deffand some tea and some Stoughton's drops; and I have some tea that the Duchess of Leinster gave me for Madame de Cambis, which she begs you would carry: and Lord Harcourt a small deal box with a Wedgwood vase. I will swear that you are just coming that you may not be more loaded. I believe I shall be in town on Wednesday or Thursday for a night, but had rather see you and your son here whenever you have nothing better to do.

Yours most sincerely,
Hor. Walpole.

2073. To Earl Harcourt.

My Lord, [1780.]

Though I think myself so inconsiderable a man, that it would be impertinent to give an account of my conduct to the public; yet, as I should be most unhappy to lie under any suspicion in the eyes of my friend of acting or being silent from mercenary views in the present most serious moment, I declare that my reasons for not appearing in

Letter 2072.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 14–15.

Westminster Hall and signing a petition to Parliament *for a necessary and effectual reform of the expenditure of public money*, are not from disapprobation of the measure, or from a wish that so salutary a measure should miscarry, or from the least disposition to court favour anywhere, or with any party; the last of which mean and interested views would be inconsistent with the whole tenor of my life, and shall never stain the small remaining part of it.

But the reason of my not signing such petition is, that possessing nothing but sinecure places, I must consider myself rather as a remote object of the reformation, than as a proper person to demand it. To petition for the abolition of sinecure places, and to hope not to be included in the reduction, would be unworthy of a man. To say I was ready to resign mine, would be hypocritic ostentation (for no man, I believe, is ready to part with his whole income), and would be a hardship on others in the same predicament, who should be unwilling to offer the same sacrifice, and would be honester men, as more sincere.

The line of conduct, therefore, that I think the most decent for me to take, is to be totally silent, and submit myself to the determination of the legislature of my country, and to be content with what in its wisdom it shall decide for the benefit of the nation. I hold nothing from personal merit or services, and must not complain if my ease and comforts are diminished for the public good. But I cannot in conscience sign a request for the abolition of the places of others, who hold them by law, as I do mine, and who are more worthy of them than I am of mine. Neither can I demand the abolition of places, not held for life, but the possessors of which are more useful members of society, have smaller incomes than mine, and execute more business than I do, who execute none—for I must

speak the truth and the whole truth. It would be a great want of feeling and of generosity in me, to desire that any man should be discarded, who is removable at pleasure, because nothing but a new law can remove me from my place.

Upon the whole, my Lord, it is no selfishness or change in my principles that makes me decline signing the petition. I shall die in the principles I have ever invariably professed. My fortune may be decreased or taken away; but it never shall be augmented by any employment, pension, or favour, beyond what I now enjoy by the gift of my father alone. I have more than I can pretend to deserve; and I beg your Lordship, in whose incorruptible integrity I have the firmest confidence, to produce this testimony under my own hand, if ever I deviate from what I have here professed. And I will flatter myself that if your Lordship should hear me suspected, from not signing any petition, of having swerved from my principles, you will do me the justice to defend me from that imputation. My character cannot be safer than in your Lordship's hands, and in them I beg leave to deposit it—for, as next to the imputation of being mercenary, I dread the charge of vanity, I entreat that this letter may not be made public. I am of too little consequence to give myself airs of clearing my conduct before it is censured; and am so obscure a man, that I may never be mentioned; and therefore I will certainly not thrust myself upon the public eye from self-conceit and with an unnecessary parade, which I despise. Allow me the honour of choosing your Lordship for my confessor, and with leaving my conscience in your trust. I am ready, with the utmost submission to the laws of my country, to take my fate with others in whatever shall be decided. I ask no favour or partiality; I am entitled to none; I have no merits to plead—but I cannot think it would become me to be at once a petitioner,

and a party petitioned against. I have the honour to be with the highest esteem, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant,

HORACE WALPOLE.

2074. To the Rev. William Cole.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1780.

I answer your letter the moment I receive it, to beg you will by no means take any notice, not even indirectly, and without my name, of my Life of Mr. Baker. I am earnest against its being known to exist. I should be teased to show it; Mr. Gough might inquire about it. I do not desire his acquaintance; and above all things I am determined, if I can help it, to have no controversy while I live. You know I have hitherto suppressed my answers to the critics of *Richard III* for that reason—and above all things, I hate theologic or political controversy—nor need you fear my disputing with you, though we disagree very considerably indeed about Papists and Presbyterians. I hope you have not yet sent the manuscript to Mr. Lort, and, if you have not, do entreat you to efface undecipherably what you have said about my Life of Mr. Baker.

I am heartily glad you enjoy health, and am equally sorry you are teased about Burnham[1]. I have, thank God, been better lately than for a year past—but I have some thoughts of going to Malvern for a month or six weeks the end of this month.

I am sorry the eggs failed. If the journey was too long, it is vain to offer you more: though I can procure them next season.

Pray satisfy me that no mention of Mr. Baker's Life

LETTER 2074.—[1] Cole's living, near Eton.

shall appear in print. I can by no means consent to it, and I am sure you will prevent it.

Yours sincerely,

H. W.

2075. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, July 6, 1780.

If I did not think that you have a satisfaction in hearing from me, and were not unwilling to grow remiss after a perseverance of forty years, I should be disposed to devolve on your nephew the function of sending you intelligence. In good truth, I am ashamed of the office. We make a ridiculous figure in every light: there is no dignity or consistence anywhere. The government, the Parliament, the parties, or rather the factions, or rather their fractions, do and undo, cross over and figure in, and seem to have neither plan nor object. The incoherencies of the last six months could only be described by a person accustomed to draw out dances for the stage. In December the tide ran into petitions and associations: the House of Commons voted the danger of prerogative, unvoted it again, were for satisfying the petitioners, and then did not give them a crumb of bread: then we were alarmed with Popery, and the town was set on fire: next, we were to revise toleration,—that was changed for new precautions against increase of Papists: then our Lords the bishops were for tolerating Popery, because it was decreasing: then the Chancellor declared he had always disliked the indulgence; but, in contradiction to the favourers of it, would himself favour their educating their children: and then—ay, then—the new bill of regulations was thrown out, nobody knows why or wherefore. If you can make head or tail of all this you are wiser than I!

The next chapter is that of the rioters, whose trials are

begun. A score have been tried, and most of them condemned. They are apprentices, women, a black girl, and two or three escaped convicts. And these Catilines, without plan, plot, connection, or object, threw a million of inhabitants into consternation, burnt their houses about their ears, besieged the Parliament, drove it to adjourn for ten days, and have saddled the capital with ten thousand men; and still terrify us so dreadfully, that we dare not dismiss two camps at our gates, lest a negro miss, and her regiment of street-walkers, should overturn the state. Not a Frenchman, not an American, appears to have had a finger in a single outrage. Oh, we are a magnanimous people! and Europe must wait with awe for the result of this campaign of bonfires! I am so ashamed of this *dénouement* of a tragedy that was horrible to behold from the number of conflagrations, and which becomes ridiculous when one perceives how easily it might have been prevented or suppressed, that I shall beg to be excused from saying any more upon it, and shall change it for a private subject, that is very agreeable to me; and, when the public stands in a contemptible light, domestic events rise in importance.

Lord Egremont[1], who has for some time been in love with my niece Lady Maria Waldegrave, the Duchess's second daughter, has at last had an audience, and demanded her. He is eight-and-twenty, is handsome, and has between twenty and thirty thousand a year. You may imagine he was not rejected by either mother or daughter. The daughter, with a charming person, is less beautiful than either of her sisters, though more liked by most men. She has spirit, a great deal of wit, and the sagacity and good sense of her father, with constant good humour and cheerfulness. We are all happy with this alliance, and Lord Egremont's family shows general satisfaction. I, who live

LETTER 2075.—[1] George Windham, second Earl of Egremont. *Walpole.*

to see so many strange events, did not expect formerly that Sir William Windham's[2] grandson would marry Sir Robert Walpole's great-grand-daughter, to the equal content of both houses. The Duke and Duchess, with the little Prince and Princess, the bride, her sisters, Lady Egremont[3], and her son the bridegroom, were all at Ranelagh together last night. I satisfied myself with seeing them at Gloucester House before they went. The company, I hear, were pleased with this exhibition; and, in truth, it was worth seeing. The Duchess's beauty still marks her as the principal object. But is not my letter like one of Shakespeare's historic plays—insurrections, a marriage, trials, a court pageant?—It is amusement to one who looks on all, as I do, with tranquil eyes, and whose plan it certainly never was to be included in any royal drama. It was one of Fortune's caprices, who loves to throw her vanities into the lap of one who never stirred an inch to seek or meet them. To-morrow I shall return alone to my little hill; pleased that my family are happy, but mourning for the disgraces of England. A little while, and England and my family will be no more my care!

2076. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 15, 1780.

As my gazettes owed their whole fund of merit to my being in London, and to your being in the north-west, with the sole though uncommon appendix of my telling you nothing but what I believe true, or telling you anything more but as report; I don't know whether I do not comply

[2] Sir William Windham, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of the reign of Queen Anne, was a principal leader of the opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. *Walpole.*

[3] Alicia, daughter of Lord Carpenter, Countess Dowager of Egremont. She married secondly Count Bruhl, Minister from Saxony, and was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte. *Walpole.*

too literally with your request if I write when I can send you neither a political nor a literary gazette. I scarce ever look at London—*quid Romae faciam?* I am in utter ignorance, nay, I am sure there is nothing new, for Cambridge was here this morning, and had nothing in his budget of more importance than the Duke of Montagu's being set out for Scotland, which you may repay by informing me when Lady Conyers's wet nurse arrives. The notion is that Lord George Gordon is not to be tried; Mr. Cambridge said, 'if not, he guessed why'; I had not the curiosity to ask him what he guessed. I have buried my curiosity; what can happen that is worth learning!

You ask me if you shall send me a *congratulatio Astonica*[1] —no: not unless it can be preceded identically in every particular like its predecessors, by a *luctus*. Your lame bird chirped truly: of which hereafter.

My court is busily occupied by a great wedding; the Duchess's second infanta, Donna Maria, is going to be married to the Conde di Egremont. It's he is grandson of Sir William Windham, and descended from proud dull old Somerset. I flatter myself their children will be dashed with loyalty, pride, and stupidity enough (in spite of Lady Maria's wit, and drops of Sir Robert's blood) to fit them for being grandees of the first class in the rising monarchy. Don't you believe that the Bavarian nobles were very vain of their *Elector* becoming the *Emperor* Charles VII, though it cost him his dominions? These hymeneals will prevent my going to Malvern, to which I had no great fancy, especially as I am in much better health than I was last summer.

I have no more paragraphs for you but a history that is both literary and political; no, not that, but exactly of the gender of our late politics; in short, riotic. You must

Letter 2076.—[1] On the reconciliation of George III to his brothers.

know an embankment is making at Richmond for drawing barges, for the benefit of the City's trade. It encroaches on the garden of Colman, manager of the little theatre in the Haymarket. He cut away the piles; the City went to law with him and the town of Richmond, and cast them, and renewed the invasion. On Monday evening Colman hired an *Association*, who stormed and levelled the new works, and knocked down two persons who opposed them, and half killed one. A committee of the City arrived on Thursday in their barge, and (I suppose by authority of Lord Amherst countersigned by Lord Bathurst) seized twenty of the rioters, and now hold them imprisoned on board their floating King's Bench, under a guard of the military, who are applied to all sauces. In a new farce of Colman, called *The Manager in Distress*, I found t'other day the portrait of Cambridge in the character of a newsmonger, *who lives about twelve miles from town.* I wondered this was so specifically marked, but he dropped this morning that he had staved off the nuisance of the embankment on his side of the river (for he lives directly opposite to Colman) by a clause in the Act of Parliament, and that offence I suppose dragged him on the stage; which is a little hard, as he had the same right to feel what Colman so much resents, and he is truly, I mean Cambridge, so benevolent and inoffensive a man, that his little foible does not deserve such treatment.

When shall you go to Nuneham? I should like to meet you there; I expect Sandby every day, who is to attempt Lady Di's drawings for my play in his new aquatinta. It is a thousand pities they should exist only in one septinity, and that the world should have no idea of the powers of her genius if the originals should perish. Bartolozzi has executed very well the drawing of her two daughters[2], but

[2] Mary Beauclerk, married (as his second wife) Francis Jenison, Count Jenison Walworth (son of an Englishman settled at Heidelberg, and

they have not half the ingredients, passions, graces, horrors, scenes, expressions, of my seven pictures. I am writing in their own closet, and it is having the continence of Scipio to say no more about them, though you know them so well; but how infinitely pleasanter if you was sitting here and talking them over! What shackled conversations are letters when one gasps for effusion! you can rhyme your sensations and stamp them immortal, and gulp them, and they half choke me; pray breathe for me, and send me something to help me—as the apothecaries say—expectorate.

2077. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, July 15, 1780.

I troubled you with a few lines at the end of last month, to beg to know when you should set out, and to mention two or three little commissions from Madame de Beauvau; and I warned you that there would be more: I believe they frightened you, and that you would not answer me for fear of them. Your terror, as often happens, increases my courage. I send you a Staffordshire vase in a box for Rousseau's friend[1], which Lord Harcourt desired me to beg you to carry; and a pound of tea from the Duchess of Leinster; and a pound of tea and two bottles of Stoughton's drops for Madame du Deffand. The Duchess of Leinster has since sent me a small picture and another pound of tea, but they are here: but I must send them to you before you go—so pray let me know when it is to be, for all these

who held offices at various German courts); Elizabeth Beauclerk, married (1787) her first cousin, George Augustus Herbert, Lord Herbert (afterwards eleventh Earl of Pembroke). She died in 1793.

Letter 2077.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 15–16.

[1] Probably M. Girardin. Rousseau died at Ermenonville, a country place belonging to him.

parcels together are not considerable. Seriously, I am much more solicitous to see you before you go, and trust I shall. Yours most sincerely,

H. Walpole.

2078. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

July 18, 1780.

Had I known whither to direct, I should not have waited for your Ladyship's congratulations (which I owed you on Lady Shelburne's delivery[1]), but should have announced Lady Maria's approaching coronet. It has many agreeable faces (after some shades). The best, next to the splendour, is the satisfaction which all Lord Egremont's family express on the occasion. Lady Egremont, Count Bruhl, Mr. Herbert[2], and Lady Elizabeth have been presented at Gloucester House; and Mr. Marsham[3] and Lady Frances are coming to town on purpose. You will, I believe, approve that having full powers to treat with Lord Egremont, I told him the Duchess would leave the terms to him, that no advantage would be taken of his passion, and that he should decide what he should think was proper for his widow and the Duchess's daughter. Lady Egremont very handsomely told me, that if it was left to the lawyers they would be guided by her jointure, which is but two thousand; but as the times are more extravagant and more dear now, she thought Lady Maria ought to have three. It is pleasant to deal in this way, and not commence union with

Letter 2078.—[1] Of a son, afterwards second Marquis of Lansdowne.

[2] Henry Herbert (1741–1811), son of Major-General Hon. William Herbert, fifth son of eighth Earl of Pembroke; M.P. for Wilton; cr. (Oct. 17, 1780) Baron Porchester, of Highclere in Hampshire; cr. Earl of Carnarvon, 1793; m. (1771) Lady Elizabeth Alicia Maria Wyndham, eldest daughter of second Earl of Egremont.

[3] Hon. Charles Marsham (1745–1811), eldest son of third Baron Romney, whom he succeeded in 1793; m. (1776) Lady Frances Wyndham, second daughter of second Earl of Egremont.

a family as if one was undermining it; so now I am to have Sir William Windham's grandson for one of my numerous nephews! I believe I shall live to be the world's uncle.

You have lost your neighbour, Mrs. Page[4], I hear, Madam, and that she has made a very reasonable will, and dispensed her money pretty equally amongst the Howes.

July 18.

I wrote the preceding page some days ago on receiving your Ladyship's last, and in expectation of a direction; but it is arrived so late, that it has made all I have said stale; however, I send it, as it tells you what relates to our great wedding; except that my moderation has not been adopted, but the jointure is to be four thousand, and the pin-money one. The wedding we think will be in about three weeks.

I am glad your Ladyship bathes in so beautiful a prospect; though I think the Tritons enjoy a better when you bathe. Glastonbury I never saw; the Peter Burrell, the proprietor, I suppose is either the uncle of Mr. Burrell, the present Lord Consort of Willoughby, or he himself; I know the grandfather's name was Peter. You are too hard, I think, on the remarried widower. His marrying again so soon is, in my opinion, a better proof of his love for his last wife, than his creation of a monument for her. He was impatient to be as happy as he had been. It requires more philosophy to venture a second time, when the first marriage is unprosperous. Your account of the bishop's tomb at Glastonbury, Madam, seems typical of what is coming. The bishop was kicked into the abbot's kitchen, you say, and then defaced by the soldiers. Abbots mayhap may grow luxurious on the spoils of bishops, and the army complete the depredation. Most of the present Bench deserve such a fate.

[4] Aunt of Lord Howe.

Your Lady Jacob reminds me of what happened to myself five-and-twenty years ago. I went to see the painted glass of Messing Church, in Essex, and dined at an alehouse. The landlady entertained me with *bons mots* of *Mr. Charles*, just as if I had known him, and was much surprised I had never heard of him. He was a Mr. Charles Luckyn, a younger brother or uncle of the late Lord Grimston, had been dead some years, but had been the George Selwyn or Hare of that village—such is fame! This is a copy in miniature of that admirable chapter in Voltaire, where a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and they are mutually astonished at each other's ignorance of the great names in their different regions.

I am forced to comment your paragraphs, Madam, for I have nothing to send you in return. The only novelty I know, is, that we have had a riot of our own at Richmond, where an embankment for barge-horses being carried before Mr. Colman's (the manager) garden by the City, he, feeling himself, like Agamemnon, a king of kings, behaved with equal *hauteur*, and levied a mob to destroy the works, which they did with hatchets last week in open daylight. The City, three days after, sent a naval force, consisting of one barge with a committee on board, who seized thirteen of the rioters, and sent them to London, where they were bailed; but the barge remains *encamped* near the bridge, according to the precedent in London; yet, notwithstanding the terror spread through Europe by the camps in the two parks, and by the barge at Richmond, fifteen Russian men-of-war are arrived at Copenhagen, and are expected southwards, with no friendly dispositions towards us. But what signifies any credit we lose abroad, while we are all *puissant* at home, and can bestow the diadem of Greenwich Hospital on Sir Hugh Palliser[5]? Is not it more eligible to be emperor

[5] He had recently been appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital.

of ten miles round London, than to extend our empire as Lord Chatham did from the Oronooco to Japan?

I shall conclude this rhapsody with a dismal adventure that happened to me yesterday. The door opened, and Margaret entered with her apron spread over both arms, as a midwife presents a child to be baptized, and bearing, as I thought, the longest, leanest, naked babe I ever beheld. As she approached, I perceived that master or miss had no head, but a bloody neck. 'Heavens!' said I, 'what have you got there?' 'A friend of mine has sent me a fawn, if your honour pleases to accept it.' 'For Heaven's sake,' said I, 'take it away, I could as soon eat a child:' however, I did call her again, and begged her pardon for having treated her present so brutally; but one must have been a cannibal to have ever borne the sight of it again.

The Duchess told me to-night, at the Pavilions, that your aunt[6] is going to carry her grandson abroad, and takes the two Misses Vernon, and not her niece Dorothea[7]. Whence comes that dereliction?

I am sorry I have no talent for piscatory eclogues, since your fishermen are so polished and harmonious, and their fish-wives such flageolets. Eelinda and Salmonia would be musical names, and Turbotto and Jan Dorado of no harsh sound; but you say, 'when you climb the hills'—alas! I can climb still less than write poetry—oh, on looking again at your Ladyship's description, I see I have made a mistake, and that you ask not what Mr. Burrell, but what Mr. Bladen is proprietor of Glastonbury. In truth, I know not—I know *I* am proprietor of the chair of Johannes *Arthurus* the monk of Glastonbury, and once made the present Archbishop of Canterbury sit in it at breakfast; but I will reserve

[6] The Duchess of Bedford.

[7] Dorothea (d. 1822), fourth daughter of Rev. Sir Richard Wrottesley, seventh Baronet; m. (1780) Baron von Kutzleben, minister from Hesse-Cassel.

it now for a real abbot. It is too much honour for a renegade. If the Pope sends us a genuine Austin, well and good.

I do now expect all Martinico ships safe in Torbay—not because Sir Hugh is president of crippled sailors, but because *Venus orta mari mare praestat eunti.*—Good night, Madam!

2079. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, July 24, 1780.

I RECEIVED yours of June 30th, and have this moment got that of the 8th of this month, which tells me how opportunely mine appeared to disperse M. de Barbantan's fictitious visions. It will be fortunate if I am able hereafter to contradict the superstructure he shall raise on the junction of the fleets of Bourbon, to the amount of thirty-six sail, in the West Indies; where, I doubt, Sir George Rodney is far from superior. *We* entertain some visions too; and, since the reduction of Charleston, look on America as at our feet. We reckon, too, on Spain's desertion of the family compact;—but the junction of their fleets is no capital confirmation. I do know that we have fallen away extremely by living on such airy sustenance. For these three, or four, or five years, we have dined on meals to come, and had little to pick but the bones of provisions we have lost. As I have nothing new to communicate or announce in the political line, I am glad to quit so disagreeable a theme.

I cannot control your ingenious plea against the *ex-post-facto* law that I should wish to establish, on the occasion of a second present that you are sending me—or rather a thousandth present; but I do earnestly beg it may be the last. Mr. Morrice is confined at Paris by the gout, or at least was when I heard of him; so I cannot particularize

my thanks yet: though, the more I like what he brings me, the less I shall be able to refrain from scolding you. You deserve that I should serve you as Mrs. Bracegirdle, the vestal actress, treated the old Lord Burlington, with whom he was in love in vain. One day he sent her a present of some fine old china. She told the servant he had made a mistake; that it was true the letter was for her, but the china for his lady, to whom he must carry it. Lord! the Countess was so full of gratitude when her husband came home to dinner! Observe, after the *ex-post-facto* crystal, the next munificence goes to Linton *à la Bracegirdle*; and I do not think I am very modest to begin only then.

I must notify the rupture of our great match, which I announced in my last. Lord Egremont, who proves a most worthless young fellow, and is as weak and irresolute[1], has behaved with so much neglect and want of attention, that Lady Maria heroically took the resolution of writing to the Duchess[2], who was in the country, to desire her leave to break off the match. The Duchess, who had disliked the conduct of her future son-in-law, but could not refuse her consent to so advantageous a match, gladly assented; but the foolish boy, by new indiscretion, has drawn universal odium on himself. He instantly published the rupture, but said nothing of Lady Maria's having been the first to declare off; and thus everybody thinks he broke off the match, and condemns him ten times more than would have been the case if he had told the truth, though he was guilty enough in giving the provocation. We are all charmed with the sense and spirit of my niece, who would not risk so probable a chance of unhappiness, though the fortune was so great, and she could not dislike his

LETTER 2079.—[1] Horace Walpole states in his *Last Journals* (vol. ii. p. 448) that Lord Egremont was influenced in this affair by Lady Melbourne and her friend, the Duchess of Devonshire.

[2] The Duchess of Gloucester.

person. Still these three charming girls inherit more of their mother's beauty than of her fortune. Each has missed one of the first matches in this country; Lady Laura Lord Carmarthen[3], Lady Maria Lord Egremont, Lady Horatia the Duke of Ancaster, after each had proposed and been accepted! The fate of young women of quality is hard: in other countries they are shut up till their parents have bargained for, without consulting, them; here they are exposed to the addresses of every coxcomb that has a title or an estate to warrant his impertinence.

The trial of Lord George Gordon is put off till November —I do not know why. Dissatisfaction grows again on the continuance of the camps, and on the numbers of boys that have been executed for the riots; for the bulk of the criminals are so young, that half a dozen schoolmasters might have quashed the insurrection. There does not appear to have been the least connection or concert between the several mobs; nor any motive in them but a sudden impulse of mischief, actuated by the contagion of example and encouraged by the inactivity of all gradations of Government. The ministers did nothing to prevent or stop the tumult; the justices of peace shrunk; the courts of justice thought of shutting up shop; the House of Lords adjourned, and so did the House of Commons, even after the worst was past. A capital blazing, and held in terror for a week by so contemptible a rabble, will not tell well in story! I pity our future historians, who will find plenty of victories in our gazettes, and scarce anywhere else! Adieu!

[3] Son of the Duke of Leeds. The marriage was broken off, the Duke not being able to make an adequate provision; Lord Carmarthen having children by his first wife, on whom the whole estate was settled. The Duke of Ancaster died just as the marriage was determined upon. Lady Laura was afterwards married to her first cousin, Lord Chewton, son of the Earl of Waldegrave. *Walpole.*

2080. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Aug. 1, 1780.

Your Ladyship's last letter and mine might have curtseyed and bowed on the road, for they certainly passed each other; nay, they might have chatted over their own contents, as they were both full of the same subject. I shall not resume it, as you may imagine how thoroughly I must be tired of it. I will only add, that the Duchess, however offended, had antecedently taken such an aversion to her future son-in-law, that she is delighted the match failed; and I will swear that the abandoned is no mourning bride, but far more gay than during his preposterous courtship. Still, I allow they are unfortunate girls to have missed so many splendid marriages as they have been flattered with. They are like the prints of Edward V, and have had coronets hanging over their heads that never lighted on them. They have been with me here since last Friday, and on Monday received a visit that gave them great joy. Their heroic cousin William[1] arrived before any of us came down to breakfast, and I made them keep him to dinner. They could not receive a proposal with more modesty than he did my compliments on his late victory. He has promised to dine with us again to-morrow; but did not forget to desire I would make his compliments to your Ladyship the first time I should write.

Though *our* story has made so much more noise, it is not touching and melancholy like the silent one your Ladyship tells me of poor Mrs. Byng. I remember to have heard at

Letter 2080.—[1] Captain (afterwards Admiral) Hon. William Waldegrave (1753–1825), second son of third Earl Waldegrave. On July 4, 1780, in command of the *Prudente* and in company with the *Licorne*, he captured the French frigate *Capricieuse*. Admiral Waldegrave was created Baron Radstock, of Castletown, Queen's county, in 1800.

the time that Lord Torrington[2] was the sole cause of his brother's ruin.

I find my materials run so short, that I shall postpone my letter to another post. These last ten days have been totally engrossed by my own family: when once one has told the story, it is not fair to tease others with impertinent collateral circumstances that are important to nobody but the concerned.

Wednesday, 3rd.

William *the Prudent* kept his word, stayed all night, and left us this morning before breakfast. I do not wonder his cousinesses are so fond of him: if he is Mars at sea, he is smooth as a calm at land. He tells us from Navestock[3] that the Parliament is to be dissolved next week, which I find is the general opinion. My nieces leave me to-morrow, and are to be woodland nymphs for the rest of the season. I shall go to Park Place next week for a few days, and perhaps to Nuneham, if the Lord and Lady are there, of which I am not certain; nor shall I if there is a general election, for I abhor hearing details of elections.

The Countess Cowper[4] is at the point of death with a cancer. This is all the news our region furnishes.

2081. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1780.

You have perhaps heard, or at least seen in the papers, enough of the story of my niece Lady Maria and Lord Egremont, not to be surprised at my late silence. The treaty occupied me for some time, and the rupture since.

[2] George Byng (d. 1812), fourth Viscount Torrington. His brother, Hon. John Byng, succeeded him as fifth Viscount, and married Bridget, daughter of Commodore Arthur Forrest.

[3] Lord Waldegrave's seat in Essex.

[4] Georgiana Carteret, Dowager Countess Cowper. She died on Aug. 25, 1780.

Do not be alarmed ; I am not going to suffocate you with the detail. I will only say that she has behaved with a good sense, spirit, and gentleness, that, except the first, surprised me ; and she blended the two last with such charming propriety, that nothing but perfection in the first could have united them so gracefully. Her lover is a pitiful object, on whom her merit would have been deplorably thrown away.

You lost nothing by my silence. Though I write now, I have nothing to tell you. The Parliament was, I believe, to have been dissolved to-morrow : if it is not, I suppose it is from no renewal of love between dear friends, but proceeds either from the sailing of the Spanish fleet, or from fear of bad news from the West Indies, which might squeeze a little lemon into the elections. A leaf of laurel no bigger than one shred of a daisy would give wings to the proclamation that lies ready to fly.

I know no more literary than political news: in short, I know nothing. To-morrow I go to Park Place, and did intend to extend my progress to Nuneham, but Lady Jersey, who is at Richmond with Lady Di Beauclerk, and drank tea here yesterday evening, told me the Harcourts are to pay their annual visit to Lord Vernon on Thursday. Pray tell me when you are to be at Nuneham ; I should like to meet you there. Lady Jersey says the plan of alteration of the house is laid aside ; and all I could understand was, that the approach to the house is to be changed ; but she is too fine a lady to explain how that will produce their being better lodged.

You are desired to conclude that I could fill the rest of this page with a collection of phrases, that while they complained of want of matter, would display great ingenuity in spinning a full letter out of inanity, or if you will not be so complaisant, I do not much care. The naked truth is, that

I have not a word more to say. If you think I might as well not have written, I think so too; but at least it proves that I thought on you; and it proves, too, that in the most glorious reign in our annals, there was one moment in which one had nothing to commend.

2082. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1780.

No wonder you were charmed with Mount Edgcumbe, Madam. You have described it justly by saying, 'It has the beauties of all other places added to peculiar beauties of its own.' You must have felt, too, for its Lord and Lady, who last year beheld above one hundred ancient oaks growing exactly where they ought, felled to make room for a battery! I was not less pleased with your phrase of the old gentlewoman's 'open-armed way of receiving you.' You must have been touched with her cordiality, when you express it so significantly, for you have given a picture in one epithet, that is more pathetic than a description. I have no prospects, no adventures, to send your Ladyship in return. My own little landscape is brown and parched. A sultry east wind has reigned for eight-and-twenty days, and left us neither grass nor leaves. This is the third summer that our climate has been growing as Asiatic as our government; and the Macphersons and Dalrymples, I suppose, will hail the epoch of the introduction of camels and dromedaries in lieu of flocks of sheep; yet a Russian fleet riding in the Downs is a little drawback on our Ottoman dignity.

Lady Barrymore is not dead, as I told you, Madam, but better. The Parliament too, I hear, is not to be dissolved till next month. We news-writers cannot always warrant our goods, nor are falsities a discredit to the profession. Paragraphs of news are like roasted chestnuts; not one in

twenty is sound. They are like mottoes too, wrapped in sugar, which everybody breaks, finds nothing worth reading, and yet goes on cracking.

I was not so much misinformed about Miss Ingram's[1] match. Lord William is gone to Temple Newsham[2], *en famille*, and, they say, Lady Irwin is to pay his debts. I enlarge my qu. instead of effacing it.

It is not decent to trouble his Majesty's postman with such a scrap as this, filled only with recantations and repetitions; and therefore I shall reserve it till the wind changes, when we expect cargoes of novelties, and such victories as nothing but a new Parliament is worthy of hearing.

If the Russian squadron happens, like other folks, to insult Plymouth, I suppose you will go to see it, unless the very names of the commanders terrify you, for they sound as if selected to affront us. What think you, Madam, of Captains Cocuffsoff, Boscarcuff, Huncuff, and Melnicuff? I wish such tremendous appellations do not imprint terror enough to recall the camps into the two parks! They are at least as terrible as the schoolboys, the black maid, and the servant girls that have been hanged for obliging both Houses of Parliament to adjourn, and for burning London about the government's ears.

This morning I made my annual visit to the North, and was received by my Lady, with whom I found that superlative jackanapes, Mr. Eden. He flung himself upon the settee, and thence distributed airs of protection, as far as was consistent with giving himself no sort of trouble. The contrast was perfect, Lady North was all humility and civility; the *commis parvenu* seemed to be giving audience.

LETTER 2082. — [1] Hon. Frances Shepherd-Ingram, second daughter of ninth Viscount Irvine by Frances Shepherd; m. (1781) Lord William Gordon, second son of third Duke of Gordon.

[2] The family seat near Leeds.

Friday night, 18th.

I dined at Ditton to-day, and though Lord Beauchamp, a great news-merchant, was there, I did not learn a tittle. We have had rain and a west wind, but as it is again turned to the NE., we must still wait for the fate of the West Indies; but as my letter might be quite stale—no! I think it could not be less interesting, if it lay in my drawer this month—well, it shall go. One cannot be always in the year '59, and have victories fresh and fresh for every post-day. We have camps at home, instead of conquests abroad, and Lady Amherst's[3] assemblies on the parade, in lieu of French cannon in Hyde Park. I remember an old ironic song of Estcourt[4], with this passage:—

How with bloody French rags he has litter'd poor West-
minster Hall,
O slovenly John Duke of Marlborough!

Future Scotch historians will have no occasion to decry our present commanders; nor treaties of Utrecht and Paris to refund our conquests! So the present glorious era will, at least, wipe off one national reproach, our woful talent at negotiation. Nobody can say Mr. Eden made a shameful peace.

2083. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday, Aug. 23, 1780.

I went to town yesterday, Madam, and arrived just time enough to learn the desolation of Jerusalem. Our whole outward-bound fleets for East and West Indies are taken by the Spaniards, as in a drag-net[1]; though *they* are not

[3] Elizabeth, daughter of General Hon. George Cary; m. (1767), as his second wife, Jeffrey Amherst, first Baron Amherst.

[4] Richard Estcourt (1668–1712), actor and mimic.

Letter 2083.—[1] On Aug. 7, 1780, off Cadiz.

reckoned able fishers. Seven companies of General Rainsford's[2] new raised troops for Jamaica, and two of Lord Macleod's[3], and two ordnance ships for the East, are included in this great prize. I could not send you the virgin account in time, for Lord Macartney told me your Ladyship had ordered him to direct his letters to Ampthill, and that you should stop at Bowood. As the waters are so troubled, I conclude your host[4] will resume *his* fishing-tackle. The Parliament, it is now said, will not be dissolved. The pendulum of our council seems to vibrate very irregularly.

In the evening I went to Dr. Graham's[5]. It is the most impudent puppet-show of imposition I ever saw, and the mountebank himself the dullest of his profession, except that he makes the spectators pay a crown apiece. We were eighteen. A young officer of the Guards affected humour, and tired me still more. A woman, invisible, warbled to clarinets on the stairs. The decorations are pretty and odd, and the apothecary, who comes up a trap-door, for no purpose, since he might as well come upstairs, is a novelty. The electrical experiments are nothing at all singular, and a poor air-pump, that only bursts a bladder, pieces out the farce. The doctor is like Jenkinson in person, and as flimsy a puppet. I hope his brother, whom Mrs. Macaulay married, is not such a wooden thing on wires.

The Countess Cowper is at last delivered from her misery. She died with consummate courage, and, at the same time,

[2] Major-General (afterwards General) Charles Rainsford, Equerry to the Duke of Gloucester.

[3] Lord Macleod, who had been exiled since 1746, was allowed to return to England in 1777, when he raised a regiment of Highlanders, chiefly on the lands formerly belonging to his family. He himself was at this time serving, with one battalion of his regiment, in India.

[4] The Earl of Shelburne.

[5] James Graham (1745–1794), quack doctor, son of an Edinburgh saddler. He was at this time established in a house on the Royal Terrace, Adelphi, which he called the 'Temple of Health,' and where he showed his apparatus and treated his patients.

with the weakness of trying to conceal the cause of her death. I have heard no particulars of her will. I believe she had little to bequeath, nor has given but trifling legacies from her son. This is an important event only in this neighbourhood, and that only as it serves for conversation. If you correspond with a villager, you must, now and then, Madam, take up with our gossipry.

Another on our list of burials is a Sir Patrick Hamilton. His history is curious. He has an estate of 1,800*l.* a year in Ireland, but has lodged at Twickenham for three or four years, watching impatiently an ancient uncle, who has some money. The old gentleman, formerly a captain in the Scotch Greys, is now eighty-eight, but as beautiful and sleek as Melchisedec when he was not above two hundred, and he walks four or five miles every day, and looks as if he would outlive his late heir for a quarter of a century more. Sir Patrick was knighted when Mayor of Dublin. His lady is still more parsimonious. In his mayoralty, he could not persuade her to buy a new gown. The pride of the Hamiltons surmounted the penury of the Highlands. He bought a silk that cost five-and-fifty shillings a yard, but told his wife it cost but forty. In the evening she displayed it to some of her female acquaintance. 'Forty shillings a yard! Lord, Madam,' said one of them, 'I would give five-and-forty myself.' 'Would you, Madam? You shall have it at that price.' Judge how Sir Patrick was transported, when he returned at night, and she bragged of the good bargain she had made!

Mr. Brown has shown me his designs for improving Belvoir Castle. They show judgement, and *would be* magnificent. I asked whence the funds were to arise, for I hear the Duke's[6] exchequer is extremely empty. Sir Sampson

[6] The Duke of Rutland.

Gideon[7] follows him round Cambridgeshire, and discharges the bills his Grace leaves unpaid.

I have been writing letters and soliciting votes for Lord Macartney to be Governor of Madras; and yet can scarce wish to succeed: yet there is merit in not despising twenty thousand a year, in an age when commands over Indian mines and foreign embassies are thought below the acceptance of the beggars at Brookes's.

Friday, 25th.

Lady Hertford has brought me a *Morning Post*, in which are mighty compliments to *me*—yes, to *me*. This shows the value of praise and abuse, and how judiciously they are dispensed! The Duke of Richmond, the living temple of virtue, is the object of calumny—I of commendation! Yet methinks my principles do not entitle me more to panegyric from a pensioner than the Duke's. It talks, too, of my extensive learning, which always makes me laugh—no mortal's reading has been more superficial.

I heard last night that the Russian fleet only lifted up its leg against us, and is returned; and to-night that Lord Vernon is dead. If I receive no orders to-morrow from your Ladyship, I shall send this to Ampthill. On Monday I shall go for two or three days into Kent to visit Mr. Barrett, and see Knowle again, and some other places.

Saturday.

My Lady says nothing; go to Ampthill, letter!

2084. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1780.

The glorious campaigns in the two parks, and the vengeance inflicted on a parcel of schoolboys and housemaids,

[7] Sir Sampson Gideon (1744–1824), first Baronet; he took the name of Eardley (his wife's maiden name) in 1789, and was created an Irish peer as Baron Eardley of Spalding in the same year. He was M.P. for Cambridgeshire.

who have been executed for performing a rebellion, that was suckled for a week by the whole legislature, and by the magistracy of London, are a little obscured already by the entire capture of our East and West Indian fleets by the Spanish squadron, under the nose of the sentimental Dr. Cumberland[1]. I suppose he will be recalled now like the illustrious Stormont and Eden, as he has executed his mission; for we contrive to send proxies to receive affronts. The First Commissioner of the Admiralty[2], I suppose, will go to Portsmouth to receive a box of the ear from Captains Huncuff or Crusanuff, who seem selected by Captain Thomas Mackensie, one of the Russian commanders, to insult us by their very names. He perhaps will be invested *here* like Lord Macleod with *the Polish Star*. Apropos, two companies raised by the latter Laird for the East are taken, and two ships of ordnance, and seven of General Rainsford's companies for Jamaica.

The Parliament, it is said, and believed, will not be dissolved. The reason assigned is, that the voters in the militia cannot be spared from the camps to choose a new standing army of Parliament men. I hurry over politics, which makes one's ink blush till it is red ink; yet I have nothing else to tell you. I go on Monday to make Mr. Barrett a visit in Kent, and shall look again at Knowle.

As there is no likelihood of a general election, unless some miraculous victory should drop out of the clouds, I promise myself that you will think of Nuneham in September, where I will certainly meet you, if you give me notice. Sandby has not come near me, nor does even Strawberry furnish a paragraph; yet when I see you, I shall not be so barren as I seem to be, though I have sauntered

Letter 2084.—[1] Richard Cumberland, the dramatist, who had been sent on a secret mission to the Spanish court.

[2] The Earl of Sandwich.

away the whole summer, but my ears have not lain fallow. Adieu!

2085. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1780.

I have waited for news till I can send you none but bad. The Russian fleet is stalking in our Channel, and our own East and West India outward-bound fleets are gobbled up by the Spanish squadron off Cape Finisterre. This is the heaviest commercial blow we have yet received at once. It is an age since we have heard from America. We attributed the silence to an obstinate east wind that blew for nine-and-twenty days. There have been parentheses of west since, and we expect news every moment, and with anxiety. Thus you see I do not resign my post of your gazetteer, though it is but an irksome office when it is to record our wane. The re-conquest of America, I believe, is less near than you foreigners conjecture, and than has been so confidently foretold at home. All I know is, that we have been gaming for what was our own. When we leave off play, we shall see whether we have won or lost; nay, should we recover our stake, we must compute what it has cost. The card-money has not been cheap.

The Countess Cowper[1], mother-in-law of your pinchbeck Prince, is dead of a cancer. Her own son, Lord Spencer, is in a bad state of health. Each gets a jointure by her death.

Mr. Windham, I hear, is at Brussels on his return. I am peevish with him for having looked on you through our ill-humoured foggy eyes. I have almost always been out of luck in my recommendations; but I assure you I do you

Letter 2085.—[1] Georgina, daughter of John Carteret, Earl of Granville, first married to John Spencer, only brother of Charles, Duke of Marlborough; and secondly to the second Earl Cowper, to whom she was second wife. *Walpole.*

ample justice, and have always been completely convinced that they have been in fault. Your temper and flowing benevolence for forty years have been always uniform; and it is least of all likely that you should grow sour only to those I interfere for. I know you and my countrymen better. The latter have retained few of their virtues, but I do not find that they have exchanged them for urbanity. Mr. Windham, I believe, is a worthy man, but I wish he had been less morose.

P.S. I have heard this evening that an account is arrived of Walsingham[2] having joined Rodney, and that the Russian fleet is returned to the pole. Do not imagine, by this short letter, that, though I do not drop our correspondence, I am curtailing it by degrees. I could lengthen my letters by dwelling on circumstances; but that is not my manner. I seldom even inquire after them. The result of events is all I wish to know and to communicate. How can one wish to learn what one does not wish to remember? The newspapers give you details. I pretend but to skim the current of facts, and to mark what is true for your information. The multiplicity of lies coined every day only perplexes, not instructs. When I send you falsehoods, at least I believe or think them probable at the time, and correct myself afterwards, when I perceive I have been misled. I, who am in no secrets, trust to facts alone, as far as they come to light. Mercy on future historians, whose duty it will be to sift the ashes of all the tales with which the narratives of the present war have been crammed! Some will remain inexplicable. This jaunt of the Russian squadron will be one of the enigmas.

[2] Captain Hon. Robert Boyle-Walsingham, fifth son of first Earl of Shannon. He was lost at sea in October 1780, during a terrible hurricane in the West Indies.

2086. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 31, 1780.

I HATE to send false news, though about insignificant subjects, as the choice of churchwardens or members of Parliament, and therefore I write a line to tell you the latter is to be dissolved to-morrow.

I returned from Mr. Barrett's[1] last night, which is a prettier place than he had modestly represented. It is like himself, quiet. There is a small house that is decent, a cheerful vale, an humble stream improved, a few trees of dignity, and ground irregular enough for variety. He has some few good pictures, prints, and books, and indulges himself without extravagance. I saw some other places that I liked less, and revisited Knowle on my return, which disappointed my memory much. But unless you know how vast and venerable I thought I remembered it, I cannot give you the measure of my surprise; but then there was a trapes of a housekeeper, who I suppose was the Baccelli's[2] dresser, and who put me out of humour, and so good night.

2087. To the Earl of Upper Ossory.

My dear Lord, Berkeley Square, Aug. 31, 1780.

As I told Lady Ossory in my last that the Parliament was *not* to be dissolved, I write one line to contradict myself; for, though you are in no danger, I hate to give false intelligence. It is to be dissolved to-morrow.

I returned from Kent last night, and am going to Strawberry as fast as I can, to avoid hearing of elections. When

Letter 2086.—[1] Thomas Barrett, of Lee Priory, near Canterbury.

[2] Signorina Bacelli was mistress of the Duke of Dorset.

the Russian fleet was candidate for the Downs, and the court dared to set up nobody against it, it is not worth inquiring about petty boroughs. I should as soon care about what passes at a vestry. When we are quite prostrate, I suppose we shall have *the* member of Parliament, as there is still *the* senator at Rome.

Yours most, &c.,

H. W.

2088. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1780.

There have been twenty cross-purposes, Madam, and I have been a sufferer by them all. Lord Macartney told me your Ladyship had ordered him to direct to Ampthill; accordingly so did I. Then you stayed in the west, and I went into Kent. You directed your letter to me here, and here it waited for me, and here I found it to-day, and learn that you are to be in town to-day in a new house still in Grosvenor Place, for you move no farther than a pawn. I am as sorry for poor Mrs. Crayle as George Selwyn was for poor Mrs. Crawfurd whom he had never seen; and a good deal more sorry for his muscular pains, but do not at all interest myself about his election, nor any other body's election, while nobody will interest himself about anything else for these six weeks. I heard as I passed through the town that the Parliament was to be dissolved—a curious moment to be sure—but I suppose it is a measure to make the whole nation drunk, lest it should be afraid of the French and Spanish fleets! or regret the two that we have lost! It is certainly wise to lay ourselves open to every kind of attack, for every one that is missed counts for a victory on our side. We should not be half so glad of the arrival of the ships from the Levant, if we had not lost

those that were going to the East and West. This sort of wisdom must captivate *me*, it is so like my own. I believe I have told your Ladyship that I reckon it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not, because, as I have five cows and but one horse, the cows will eat bad hay and the horse will not. However, you may be sure I admire the verses and perfectly agree with them: the ministers are full good enough for the people. You may depend, Madam, on my neither showing nor naming; not only from fidelity, but because coarser dainties than pearls are good enough for swine.

I have not been capering at balls in the torrid zone like your Ladyship's neighbourhood, but I have been jolting over stony roads in the midst of Africa; at least I thought so, though in the heart of Kent. I have seen nothing very charming, and little new. One place struck me much, but more from recollection of old passages than from any curiosity in itself. This was Deane[1], a *triste* old seat of the Oxendens, now deserted; but it was long the residence of Sir George[2], who in my very youth was the fine gentleman of the age, extremely handsome, a speaker in Parliament, a Lord of the Treasury, very ambitious, and a particular favourite of my father—till he became so of my sister-in-law. That, and a worse story[3], blasted all his prospects and buried him in retirement:—

> For when a courtier's out of place,
> The country shelters his disgrace.

Portraits of him, and some heroines of the time—now totally forgotten, but fresh in my memory, seemed a waking vision. It was like Æneas's meeting Dido in the shades. I could not have conceived that scenes in which I was not

LETTER 2088.—[1] Near Wingham.
[2] See note 7 on letter to Mann of Feb. 1, 1745.
[3] His seduction of his sister-in-law, Arabella, daughter of Edmund Dunch, and wife of Edward Thompson.

in the least interested, could have made so strong an impression; yet they really affected me as if I were beginning the world again. I could not shake off the sensations till I came to Knowle; and that was a medley of various feelings!—Elizabeth and Burleigh, and Buckhurst; and then Charles and Anne Dorset and Pembroke [4], and Sir Edw. Sackville [5]; and then a more engaging Dorset [6], and Villiers [7], and Prior; and then the old Duke and Duchess, and Lady Betty Germaine, and the court of George II!

The place is stripped of its beeches and honours, and has neither beauty nor prospects. The house, extensive as it is, seemed dwindled to the front of a college, and has the silence and solitude of one. It wants the cohorts of retainers, and the bustling jollity of the old nobility, to disperse the gloom. I worship all its faded splendour, and enjoy its preservation; and could have wandered over it for hours with satisfaction; but there was such a heterogeneous housekeeper as poisoned all my enthusiasm. She was more like one of Mrs. St. John's abigails, than an inhabitant of a venerable mansion; and shuffled about in slippers, and seemed to *admire* how I could care about the pictures of such old *frights* as covered the walls!

When the coast is clear, and your elections over and gone drunk to bed, I shall be very happy, Madam, to wait on you at Ampthill. I have been better for these three months than in the last five years; and, though I do not allow myself to draw notes upon futurity, I like to employ my moments of health to the best advantage. Those I gladly

[4] Hitherto printed 'Anne, Dorset and Pembroke.' The celebrated Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, was a favourite heroine of Horace Walpole's; see letter of Oct. 5, 1751, to Montagu, and that to Bentley of August 5, 1752 (in which her portrait at Knowle is mentioned).

[5] Second son of second Earl of Dorset. He succeeded his brother as fourth Earl in 1624, and died in 1652. The portrait in question is by Vandyk.

[6] Charles Sackville, the sixth Earl.

[7] George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

give to the few I love—sickness and pain one should keep to oneself.

2089. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 2, 1780.

Your Lordship, I am sure, will forgive my troubling you so soon to inquire how Lady Harcourt does since her late loss[1]. I have seen such charming instances of her Ladyship's filial tenderness, that I cannot but be anxious for her on this melancholy occasion.

I have been unfortunately disappointed of the great pleasure of waiting on your Lordship, as you gave me leave to do. My journey to Malvern was prevented by the strange story of Lady Maria[2]; and when that and its consequences were quite over, and I was literally setting out in two days to Park Place, and intended to proceed to Nuneham, Lady Jersey, whom I met at Lady Di Beauclerk's at Richmond, and told so, said, 'You will not find them, for they go on the 10th to Lord Vernon's'—this was on the 8th, and as soon as I was at liberty to stir.

As I have not been willingly neglectful of the honour your Lordship and Lady Harcourt did me, I shall be very happy if you will still allow me to pay my duty to you, when the elections are a little subsided. I do not mean that I am engaged in any, but on the contrary dread falling foul of them. Do not imagine, my dear Lord, that I suppose you fling open your cellars to Doctors of Divinity or give gin to Alma Maters, or cram Bishop Butler[3] till he is still more willing to strangle you before you are half roasted in Smithfield. You neither expect to cleanse Augeas' stable, nor to drench his grooms, but I had rather

Letter 2089.—[1] Her father, Lord Vernon, died on Aug. 21, 1780.

[2] Lady Maria Waldegrave; the story mentioned was the breaking off of her engagement to Lord Egremont.

[3] The Bishop of Oxford.

stay quietly here, till the drunken riots are over even on the road, and if any part of October will not be inconvenient to you, I shall be happy to look once more at Nuneham, though I beseech you not to accept my homage if it will in the least interfere with any of your engagements, as I never can be less than I am

Your Lordship's most devoted,
Humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2090. TO THE HON. THOMAS WALPOLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 6, 1780.

I CANNOT but be infinitely obliged to you, my dear Sir, for the very friendly trouble you have given yourself, though the subject is so exceedingly afflicting to me. My dear old friend's[1] last letter shocked me as much as possible; it was a kind of taking leave of me, when I had no notion of her being ill: for, though the preceding letter had talked of her being out of order, she has so often written in the same manner after a restless night, that it had given me no sort of apprehension. You now give me some faint hopes, but my reason gives me none; for all the symptoms, that you and Wiart mention, look very ill; and, if there are any favourable, her great age forbids my trusting to them. It ought to have prepared me better for the blow; but the distance I am at, the impossibility of going to her, or of being of any use, and the anxiety I must remain under till another post, are much more preponderant than the cold reflections that should comfort me. I am so uncommonly obliged to her, that if I did not admire and love her for her sake, gratitude for my own would fill me with regret. My

LETTER 2090.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 16-20.

[1] Madame du Deffand.

only satisfactions are that she does not suffer and that she is so tranquil. Should she be capable of hearing it, when you receive this, I entreat you to tell her—but I do not know how to express how much I love her and how much I feel. You will judge a little by the extreme gratitude I feel to you and my cousin for your attention to her. While it is possible, I beseech you to continue it. Nothing is so reasonable, or so true, as what you say, dear Sir, about her still having company and suppers. They would kill me if the distemper did not. But, amazing as it is that a whole nation should choose to communicate their last moments to a crowd of indifferent wretches, or that the latter should be such wretches as to like to be spectators, or not to care while they can junket, still this is so universally the custom of the French, that I am sure my dear friend would think herself abandoned if she was treated otherwise.

If I indulged my own feelings, I should write on this sad subject till the end of my paper. But I must not abuse your goodness—only pray tell M. Wiart how very kindly I take his attention to me. I can scarce bear to name it, but should the worst happen, I beg, my dear Sir, that you will get from M. Wiart all my letters, and keep them till you come. After much entreaty, my dear friend did, I believe, burn many, but some, I fear, she kept. As they all went by the post, and I know were thoroughly inspected, I should care not who saw them—except a bookseller, and thence everybody. My bad French ought to be their security even against that chance, but you cannot wonder that I do not desire to run even that, especially as a power of exposing me to ridicule would compensate for the badness of the language[2].

[2] The letters written by Horace Walpole to Madame du Deffand since 1778 (those written previous to that date had been in part restored to him, and in part destroyed by Madame du Deffand at his request)

Your own affairs[3] I hope go on prosperously. Events there have been none since the capture of our fleets. At present I take all the care I can to hear nothing, for I am sure the first thing would be about elections, a subject I abhor. I am much more concerned for the poor post-horses than for the candidates, for the former cannot help being sold. They say there are, or are to be, some new peers, but it is indifferent to me who goes out of one stable into another. Geary and Barrington, they say, have both struck their flags.

I wrote this on receiving your letter, but as it could not be in time for the post, I must reserve it to Friday, before which it is possible that I may have another letter from M. Wiart. I shall tremble to open it, but will not finish this till it must go to town.

Thursday night.

I must send this to town to-morrow morning, though I have had no more letters. I don't know that I could, but my impatience and uneasiness increase every hour. Would it be impossible to give James's powder? if it were but five or six grains? I left some with her, and I conclude you have some. I would give the universe to have her try it. I earnestly beg you to recommend it.

P.S. The new peers are Fitzroy[4], Lord Gage[5], Lord Chief Justice De Grey[6], and Sir W. Bagot[7].

were handed over on her death to Thomas Walpole, who restored them to Horace Walpole.

[3] Thomas Walpole was engaged in a lawsuit in the French courts.

[4] Younger brother of the third Duke of Grafton; created Lord Southampton.

[5] Created a peer of Great Britain as Baron Gage of Firle, Sussex.

[6] Created Baron Walsingham.

[7] Created Baron Bagot.

2091. To the Earl of Strafford.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1780.

I am very happy at receiving a letter from your Lordship this moment, as I thought it very long since we had corresponded, but am afraid of being troublesome, when I have not the excuse of thanking you, or something worth telling you, which in truth is not the case at present. No soul, whether interested or not, but deafens one about elections. I always detested them, even when in Parliament; and when I lived a good deal at White's, preferred hearing of Newmarket to elections; for the former, being uttered in a language I did not understand, did not engage my attention; but as they talked of elections in *English*, I could not help knowing what they said. It does surprise me, I own, that people can choose to stuff their heads with details and circumstances, of which in six weeks they will never hear or think more. The weather till now has been the chief topic of conversation. Of late it has been the third very hot summer; but refreshed by so little rain, that the banks of the Thames have been and are, I believe, like those of the Manzanares. The night before last we had some good showers, and to-day a thick fog has dissolved in some as thin as gauze. Still I am not quite sorry to enjoy the weather of adust climates without their tempests and insects. Lady Cowper I lately visited, and but lately; if what I hear is true, I shall be a gainer, for they talk of Lord Duncannon having her house at Richmond: like your Lordship, I confess I was surprised at his choice. I know nothing to the prejudice of the young lady[1]; but I should not have selected, for

Letter 2091.—[1] Lord Duncannon married, on Nov. 27, 1780, Lady Henrietta Frances Spencer, second daughter of first Earl Spencer by Margaret Georgiana Poyntz, and sister of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire.

so gentle and very amiable a man, a sister of the empress of fashion, nor a daughter of the goddess of wisdom.

They talk of great dissatisfactions in the fleet. Geary and Barrington are certainly retired. It looks, if this deplorable war should continue, as if all our commanders by sea and land were to be disgraced or disgusted.

The people here have christened Mr. Shirley's new house *Spite Hall*[2]. It is dismal to think that one may live to seventy-seven, and go out of the world doing as ill-natured an act as possible! When I am reduced to detail the gazette of Twickenham, I had better release your Lordship; but either way it is from the utmost attention and respect for your Lordship and Lady Strafford, as I am ever most devotedly and gratefully yours,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2092. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Sept. 12, 1780.

WHEN the Bedfordshire election is over, and Lady Spencer has been chaired at St. Alban's, I shall be ready to steal to Ampthill, Madam; but would not for the mines of Golconda find myself in the midst of one of those combustions: I should be, according to the incomparable and picturesque simile, like a dog in a dancing school. I was like anything still more awkward and confused last week. Coming out of Lady Di's in the dark, I missed my way and pitched headlong down a perpendicular bank into a brick pavement laced with orange tubs and flower-pots, broke two of the latter to powder, and yet only bruised my hand and slightly hurt my hip. Had I weighed more than gossamer I must have been dashed to pieces.

[2] It is said to have been built on purpose to intercept a neighbour's view of the Thames.

Your Ladyship has been very charitable to Mr. Byng; but what must Lord Torrington feel, if he has any feeling, to know his brother eats the bread he has from a minister whom the elder always opposed! This, I should think, would wound one to the quick.

Admiral Keppel is thrown out at Windsor; but, though all the royal bakers, and brewers, and butchers, voted against him, you must not imagine it was by mandate[1], whatever Ramus the page might say; for his Majesty himself told the Admiral that he hoped he would carry his election: how saucy in his own servants to thwart his wishes! I know nothing at all worth writing: of all dull letters, a short one is the best.

2093. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 19, 1780.

The note I have this moment received from Wiart of the 10th increases my alarms, which his three last bulletins had almost quieted. He says it is the twentieth day, and the fever not gone. Indeed her not dictating one word herself has to me a still worse aspect. Your silence too has the same. I shall dread every post. I know how much her great age and weakness are against her. Yet I should hope, if she had taken James's powder; though I did not press it so much as I wished to do, because I am at a distance and

Letter 2092.—[1] It was generally reported that the King himself canvassed for votes against Keppel. 'One elector, a silk-mercer, stated that his Majesty, in canvassing him, said in his usual quick manner, "The Queen wants a gown—wants a gown—No Keppel!—No Keppel!" The Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick (afterwards Duke of York) took no pains to conceal their satisfaction when Keppel was at once elected for Surrey. Prince Augustus (afterwards Duke of Sussex), at this time aged seven, was locked up in the nursery at Windsor for wearing the Admiral's colours.' (See *Rockingham Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 424-5.)

Letter 2093.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 21-3.

cannot be a perfect judge. All I can say is to give you and your son a million thanks for your extreme attention to her. Though I must not impute it all to myself, I take it as kindly as if you could have no other motive.

You know, you must know, how occupied all the world here is with elections; and you may judge how singular I am who do not care a straw about them. The court seems likely to be no gainer by the dissolution; and it [is] said will lose, particularly in the county elections. Burke has given up Bristol: Sawbridge was rejected in London: but Kirkman being dead a few hours before the poll closed, there will be much squabbling about it. The authority employed to depose Keppel at Windsor has been returned with interest. Suffolk and Surrey offered to choose him. He preferred the latter, and will throw out Lord Onslow's son, who has been jockeyed at Guilford by his cousin the Colonel. Charles Fox is likely to succeed at Westminster. The seven new peers are Earl Talbot (for Rice's son[1]), Lord Gage, Sir W. De Grey, Sir W. Bagot, Fitzroy, old James Brudenel, and Mr. Herbert of High Clear. I believe there is nothing else new, if there is, I know it now. Your nephew, I see, is chosen at Wigan, and you and your brother as usual, and Mackreth—as if one of the family—and so he is, I believe, as much as he that chooses him[2]. Adieu! My dear Sir, I am most anxious, but with little hope. Thank God she does not suffer. Tell her I have written to you, if she is capable of knowing it.

P.S. I am forced to direct this to you at Madame du Deffand's, for I left your direction at Strawberry Hill and forgot it.

[1] Mr. Rice (who died in 1779) married Lord Talbot's daughter and heiress.
[2] Lord Orford.

2094. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 19, 1780.

As I think you do not suspect me of neglect when I have anything worth telling you, you will perceive that there are periods when it takes a good deal of time to form events—a whole campaign may not produce two. At other seasons the market is over-stocked; or, after a glut, there is a scarcity. The dissolution of the Parliament could not surprise you, it had been so announced. Your nephew, I see by the papers, is re-elected[1]. I have no other intelligence; and of all articles of news, those on elections are the last I seek. I know as little what the fleets are doing; or where they are, doing nothing. One thing I do discern, that the approaching recovery of America is about as near as the millennium. Prophecy will sink as low as fortune-telling: no gipsy is less to be credited than our predicting politicians, who, for these last five or six years, have been cruelly brought to shame on the conquests they have announced. By their bubbles the nation are almost stripped of their last shilling, like the dupes who hunt the philosopher's stone. America is now like the Holy Land; none but bigots and madmen will think of subduing it: nor does the tone of resumption much become us, who are not in the ascending scale.

Admiral Keppel has been thrown out at Windsor, and, it is pretended, by the personal veto of the first inhabitant of the Castle: the consequence already has been that the counties of Surrey and Suffolk solicited the honour of electing the Admiral, who has accepted the offer from the former.

Seven new barons are made: Earl Talbot, that the peerage

Letter 2094.—[1] Sir Horace Mann the younger was re-elected for Maidstone.

may descend to his daughter's[2] children; Sir William De Grey[3], late Chief Justice; Lord Gage, turned into an English peer; General Fitzroy; Mr. Brudenel; Mr. Herbert; and Sir William Bagot[4]. There have been some shiftings of places of the second rate, and some promotions, but none of consequence.

This is literally the sum total of my knowledge; as I have such a fair field of paper lying before me, you may be sure I would embroider it if I had wherewithal. However, I have less scruple in sending such a scrap, as I must write to you again soon, for I hear Mr. Morrice[5] is arrived in England. Where he is, I cannot tell, but I trust I shall see or hear from him soon; and then I am as certain of having cause to thank you—which, by the way, I do *d'avance*: but, though my gratitude will always last, you are to remember that it is never to receive any additional fund.

2095. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 23, 1780.

Though I care so little about elections, Madam (because I have such a contempt for the aggregate when it is assembled), I feel for the vexation your civil war produces, and will produce to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory; and take it as a mark of your persuasion of the interest I must adopt in all your affairs, that you are so good as to communicate the detail. I hope you will triumph at least; which is very consolatory, when one has no more than the disappointment

[2] Lady Cecil Rice, wife of George Rice; on her father's death she became Baroness of Dinevor. *Walpole.*

[3] Sir W. de Grey was created Lord Walsingham, General Fitzroy Lord Southampton, and Mr. Herbert Lord Porchester. James Brudenel, made Lord Brudenel, was next brother of George, Duke of Montagu, and Earl of Cardigan. *Walpole.*

[4] The sixth Baronet, created (Oct. 17, 1780) Baron Bagot of Blithfield, Staffordshire; d. 1798.

[5] Humphrey Morice, Lord Warden of the Stannaries.

of antagonists to lament. You will be so glad to see your house empty for a day or two, and have the empty bottles removed, that I will not encumber you the only moment you can breathe. Indeed I could not well, for I have advertised my long-delayed last volume of *Painters*, to come out, and must be in town to distribute it. I seized this opportunity to publish it, because I was sure nobody would think of it or me, and that it will have a favourable chance for being taken no notice of. It is a debt I owed, and I will take care to incur no more. My cousin[1] and namesake is come into Parliament, which baptizes me *the old H. W.*— and then one must not play the fool. Charles Fox, I have just heard, has beaten Lord Lincoln from the hustings[2], of which I am very glad. George Selwyn has been here for a moment, this morning, on the road from *his* defeat[3]. I did not quite enjoy him, as his errand was to give a glimpse of my house to the Signorina[4] and the official Signora Madre, and he would point out twenty things to them of which they had no more conception than of the Apocalypse; yet he entertained me with some of his calamities; they hanged him in effigy, and dressed up a figure of Mimie, and pinned on its breast these words, alluding to the gallows, 'This is what I told you you would come to.' From Gloucester he went to Luggershall, where he was received by ringing of bells, and bonfires—'Being driven out of my capital,' said he, 'and coming into that country of turnips, where I was adored, I seemed to be arrived in my Hanoverian dominions.' *This* paid for the burden of the governess and child! There are other folks[5] who would feel more comfortable among

LETTER 2095. — [1] Hon. Horatio Walpole (1752–1822), eldest son of second Baron Walpole of Wolterton (who was created in 1806 Earl of Orford, and whom he succeeded in 1809). He had recently been elected for Wigan.

[2] Fox was standing for Westminster; he was returned in October by a large majority.

[3] At Gloucester, which he had represented since 1754. He sat in the next Parliament for his family borough of Ludgershall.

[4] Maria Fagniani.

[5] The King.

their turnips just now, than in their castle, having been treated on the terrace with the sight of crape-cockades inscribed, 'For Admiral Keppel.'—If *Ich Dien* does not wear one, he at least, I hear, *boudes* those who voted against the Admiral—so, victories may be bought too dear!

I am trembling at every letter I receive from Paris. My dear old friend [6], I fear, is going! The last, which was on Tuesday, had left her at the twentieth day of a fever. To have struggled for twenty days at eighty-four shows such stamina that I have not totally lost hopes; but yet that letter was worse than the three preceding, which had much flattered me. It will be a grievous loss; but when one is old oneself, one cannot have many such misfortunes.

Miss Wrottesley's 5,000*l.* will purchase a princely turnippery; but I doubt even that nor a baron will indemnify her for the capital she quits—and yet, 5,000*l.* will soon, I believe, buy a principality in England.

2096. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 24, 1780.

I CONGRATULATE you on your success [1], and rejoice in it more from the aspect of the blossoms of virtue than from any expectation of fruits: and yet I am persuaded that if brought to maturity, it must be by temper, and not by being forced in hotbeds. Violence, especially in opposition, neither lasts, nor produces lasting benefits. The enormous deviations of late from the constitution will never be corrected permanently by contrary extremes; and to induce the nation to labour its restitution, it must be convinced

[6] Madame du Deffand; she died on Sept. 24, 1780.

LETTER 2096.—[1] The success was probably the transaction recorded by Horace Walpole in his *Last Journals* (vol. ii. p. 427): 'A subscription of 17,000*l.* was entered into at York, against Lascelles, the late court member for the county, and he was forced to decline standing. Mr. Wyvil and Mr. Mason the chief actors against him.'

that the necessary medicines tend to bring back the habit of body that can be proved to have bestowed the most vigorous state of happiness. Novelties, of which the effects are to be experimental and uncertain, will never unite a variety of minds in one system. I am not bigoted to the specific mode of the old constitution because old; nor think it absolutely perfect; but all experience teaches us, that a mass of people will be so bigoted, and will sooner be allured by names than by reasonings. Their enemies too will be strengthened by preaching up the loveliness of the very constitution they have violated, if deviations from it are recommended as remedies.

I could say still much more against violence, but that seems unnecessary. The episode of Lord George Gordon proved I was not mistaken. It was at the eve of frightening all the world into a *demand* of military government. I go farther: it is my opinion that the deepest schemers of absolute power long for insurrections: and if I do not refine too much, I think I can descry that wish in the total neglect of all prevention of the late riots; these are but the outlines of my thoughts *on one side.* We shall perhaps agree better in those *on the other,* where I discern as many defects, as I observe voluntary errors in those they oppose. The result of both is despair; I foresee nothing but ruin, composed of various calamities. My time of life makes me fly to that ungenerous comfort of paltry old men—what does it signify to me who am going out of the world?

One chapter in all this folio of follies does astonish me—I mean the conduct of France and Spain. They congregate all Europe against us to have the childish satisfaction of smutting our face! say if you please, for the postponed malice of destroying us in detail; but is that a stroke of policy, when they might crush us at a blow? I am tempted to suspect our ministers of being Machiavels.

They seem indeed to have no object but of undoing their own country; but are they not rather occupied in swaying the cabinets of Versailles and Madrid, and confounding their plans? Was not it Agathocles, who when besieged in Syracuse, invaded Carthage?

Like you, I willingly turn from politics, of which I am heartily sick, to pleasanter themes.

My humility is so predominant that I am afraid of pushing it to affectation: upon my conscience, I had rather waive the distinction your friend Mr. Gilpin[2] is willing to pay me. Any interested view he cannot have, for I have neither wealth nor credit, and, were it not presumption, would add, never *will* have either. But it is solemnly true that I have so mean an opinion of myself that I know not how to consent to any honour. Genius I absolutely have not—taste if you please—for of that I should be no more vain than of personal beauty; but I have so much littleness in my mind, such a want of virtue, that any praise to my understanding makes me cast my eyes inwards with contrition and disgust. Would not an idol of mud blush if it could, at seeing itself crowned with laurel!—Having made my confession to you, my confessor, do what you please, but save me from compliments, and from *Honourables*—there I am proud, not humble. I am thoroughly convinced that that wretched ray of an earldom procured me half my little fame. Things I have published without my name, though not worse than their baptized brethren, have perished in their merited obscurity. I can smile at it, but at least it makes me set no value on my literary reputation. It is not derogating from these professions that I am on the point of publishing my last volume of *Painters*. On

[2] Rev. William Gilpin (1724–1804), Vicar of Boldre in the New Forest. He wrote on scenery, and on religious subjects, and was something of an artist.

the contrary, I have fixed on this moment as the most favourable to the little notice I desire should be taken of it.

I will certainly meet you at Nuneham. Tell me precisely when you will be there. You will not see me happy —I am not now: I dread every day receiving an account of the death of my dear old friend, Madame du Deffand. The last letter from Paris left me small hopes. Adieu!

Yours most cordially,

H. W.

2097. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

I rejoice in your triumph, Madam, though I cannot partake of your fireworks. Not only had I ordered my books to be advertised, but I have a more melancholy cause that detains me. The letters that I have received to-day from Paris bid me be prepared to receive an account of my dear old friend's death. I knew she had been very ill, but till these two last posts, I had been flattered that she was recovering. To-day her own secretary, and Mr. T. Walpole, pronounced that there are no hopes. I had sent James's powder, and had begged my cousin, if possible, to obtain her trying it—but alas! I knew France too well, and physicians too, and their physicians still more, to have much hope of its being given; but it is too shocking to be told that the physician has laid aside all medicines, and yet would not suffer her to take it! When is it best to try it but in despair? and when, if not at eighty-four? He said it would vomit her, and kill her. Is not he killing her himself by trying nothing? and by not trying the powder in that case? This is a horrible thought, though she could not be immortal; and the terror I have been under for

some time of her becoming deaf, added to blindness, had made me more reconciled to her great age, and to the probability of losing her. She retains, that is, did retain her senses, did not suffer, knew her situation, and was perfectly tranquil, and spoke little; but, by the whole description, she appears to me to have been almost worn out. I tremble for the next letter—though it is just as if I had already received it.—Another friend gone! I scarce have one left of above my own age. It is these memorandums that at the same time reconcile one to one's own departure. What can one expect but to survive one's friends if one lives long?—In this unhappy mood, Madam, I should be bad company. Can I care about elections? If an opponent's death could set Mr. Burke to moralizing on the hustings[1] at Bristol, how must the loss of so dear a friend affect me! The savage physician exasperates me; what transport should I have felt, if I could have saved her, though but for six months! Perhaps I could not—I will not be unjust; it is probable that I should not—but oh! not to let me try! It augments my abhorrence of physicians and professions. Long ago I said that the devil's three names, Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, were given to him in his three capacities of president of priests, lawyers, and physicians. I repeat it now with rancour: Beelzebub and Bouvard are synonymous terms in my lexicon. Five years ago I loved the wretch, for he saved her, as I thought, in my presence—did that give him a right over her life? Has not he cancelled my gratitude? Can one love and hate

Letter 2097.—[1] In his speech of Sept. 19, announcing his retirement from the Bristol election, Burke thus referred to the sudden death of Mr. Coombe, who intended to stand for that city:—'The melancholy event of yesterday reads to us an awful lesson against being too much troubled about any of the objects of ordinary ambition. The worthy gentleman, who has been snatched from us at the moment of the election, and in the middle of the contest, whilst his desires were as warm, and his hopes as eager as ours, has feelingly told us, what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.' (*Gent. Mag.* 1780, p. 619.)

at once? I would if I could—yes, I do thank him for prolonging her life for five years—but oh! professions, professions! how *l'esprit du corps* absorbs all feelings!—and how prejudiced becomes principle! Dear old woman, she is now, I fear, no more!—I can write no more, Madam, for I can write on no other subject, and have no right to torment you with my concern. You shall hear no more of it. Nature takes care that hopeless griefs should not be permanent, and I have seen so much affectation of lamentation where little was felt, and I know so well that I have often felt most where I have discovered least, that I will profane my affection to my lost friend with no ostentation—much less to those who never knew her. I live enough in solitude to indulge all my sensations, without troubling others.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter I have had another shock,—General Conway has broken his arm! Lady Aylesbury assures me there is as little bad as there can be in such an accident, and that I shall hear again to-morrow. Still I shall go to him on Friday.

2098. To the Rev. William Cole.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1780.

I must inquire how you do after all your electioneering agitations, which have growled even around your hermitage. Candidates and their emissaries are like Pope's authors,

They pierce our thickets, through our groves they glide[1].

However, I have barred my doors; and when I would not go to an election for myself, I would not for any one else.

Letter 2098.—[1] 'They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide.' Pope, *Prologue to Satires*, l. 8.

Has not a third real summer, and so very dry one, assisted your complaints? I have been remarkably well, and better than for these five years. Would I could say the same of all my friends—but, alas! I expect every day to hear that I have lost my dear old friend Madame du Deffand. She was indeed near eighty-four, but retained all her interior faculties—two days ago the letters from Paris forbade all hopes!—so I reckon myself dead as to France, where I have kept up no other connection.

I am going at last to publish my fourth volume of *Painters*, which, though printed so long, I have literally treated by Horace's rule, *Nonumque prematur in annum*. Tell me how I shall send it to you.

Yours as ever,
H. W.

2099. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1780.

I did fear, and for the last ten days did expect the unhappy event for which you bid me now prepare, dear Sir. I own it afflicts me more than I thought it would, considering her great age, and the constant dread I have lived in for some time of her growing deaf. The cruel obstinacy of Bouvart augments my concern. It is very possible that James's powder would not have saved her; but what absurd reason to say it would kill her by vomiting—when he has not the smallest hope, and gives her nothing. What does he but say that *he* will prescribe the precise mode in which she shall die? Nothing could have given me a more happy transport than to have prolonged her life, if but for six months. Can I help suspecting that he thinks that she will

Letter 2099.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 23–7.

be longer dying, and that he shall have a few more fees? How I abhor all professions!

Her silence and *assoupissement* make me hope she is almost insensible. Indeed I dreaded her dictating some letter to me which I could not stand. I loved her most affectionately and sincerely, and my gratitude to her is without bounds. I admired her, too, infinitely; her understanding, I am sure, till within these three months was astonishing. I received one instance of her affection that I never can forget while I have a grain of memory left, and which I have never had an opportunity of telling her how deeply I felt. But I am sure, when you hear it, you will think it justifies all the sorrow I feel for losing her—for alas! by this time I doubt I have lost her. If she still exists, and you can show her any mark of kindness, it will be the highest obligation to me. I feel thoroughly all you have done.

Yesterday I received another shock. General Conway has had a fall, I know not how, and broken his arm. Lady Ailesbury assures me he is in no danger, and has even no fever, but I shall go to him myself to-morrow after the post is come. I tremble for letters from Paris, yet must wait for them!

We have little news. The papers say that General Dalrymple is arrived with bad accounts from New York—it is probable, for nothing is told. But I credit little on any side for some time. From Glasgow we are told of revolts in five Spanish-American provinces, but it is from *Glasgow*, whence I am still longer before I believe. Can any truth come out of Nazareth?

Charles Fox is returned for Westminster, but Lord Lincoln has demanded a scrutiny. Robert Ongley and Lascelles have been forced to give up Bedfordshire and Yorkshire. To-day ends the election for Surrey. I am going to Ditton this evening; and if I learn the event will add it, as this does not go to London till to-morrow.

I am truly sorry your business moves so slowly. I was in hopes M. Necker's good sense would have been able to do justice justice, and give rapidity to her motions, though he cannot take off her bandage.

I beg you, dear Sir, to thank Wiart for his attentions to me. I thank him ten thousand times for those he pays to his dear mistress. Oh, if it were not too late to give her James's powder!

P.S. As I went through Kingston I saw the Union flag displayed at an inn, and the windows illuminated, so I knew the Admiral had succeeded. He had a majority of 700, on which Onslow gave out. As I came home I saw at a distance a great bonfire. That must be at Hampton Court or Hampton, and I hear there are to be illuminations at Windsor, when the account arrives there. What happened there is to be a capital episode, they say, when the Parliament meets. Adieu.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

2100. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I did not go to Malvern, and therefore cannot certify you, my good Sir, whether Tom Hearne mistook stone for brass or not, though I dare to say your criticism is just.

My book, if I can possibly, shall go to the inn to-morrow, or next day at least. You will find a great deal of rubbish in it, with all your partiality— but I shall have done with it.

I cannot thank you enough for your goodness about your notes that you promised Mr. Grose—but I cannot possibly be less generous and less disinterested; nor can by any means be the cause of your breaking your word—in short, I insist on your sending your notes to him—and as to my

Life of Mr. Baker, if it is known to exist, nobody can make me produce it sooner than I please, nor at all if I do not please; so pray send your account, and leave me to be stout with our antiquaries, or curious. I shall not satisfy the latter, and don't care a straw for the former.

The Master of Pembroke[1] (who he is, I don't know) is like the lover who said,

Have I not seen thee, where thou hast not been?

I have been in Kent with Mr. Barrett, but was not at Ramsgate: the Master, going thither, perhaps saw me. It is a mistake not worth rectifying. I have no time for more, being in the midst of the delivery of my books.

Yours ever,
H. W.

2101. To Earl Harcourt.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 3, 1780.

I have had but too melancholy excuses, my dear Lord, for not having yet paid my duty to you. For these three weeks I have been alarmed, and been expecting the death of my dear old friend Madame du Deffand. I have had no letter from Paris this week, and fear it is over. In the midst of this distress I was shocked with an account of General Conway having broken his arm; too true, though he is in the fairest way possible. Before these misfortunes, I had settled with my bookseller to publish my last volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*, and had calculated I should be returned from Nuneham before the publication, which, having been advertised for the ninth, I must perform. This will make it impossible for me to wait on your Lordship before the beginning of next week, when I shall make Mr. Conway another visit, whom I had time to stay with

Letter 2100.—[1] Dr. James Brown.

but one night since his accident. I flatter myself I shall not interfere with any of your Lordship's or Lady Harcourt's plans, in which case you would forbid the homage of your Lordship's most devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. I will bring the volume with me, that you may not have the trouble of sending for it.

2102. To MRS. HOGARTH.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 4, 1780.

MR. WALPOLE begs Mrs. Hogarth's acceptance of the volume[1] that accompanies this letter, and hopes she will be content with his endeavours to do justice to the genius of Mr. Hogarth. If there are some passages less agreeable to her than the rest, Mr. Walpole will regard her disapprobation only as marks of the goodness of her heart, and proofs of her affection to her husband's memory—but she will, he is sure, be so candid as to allow for the duty an historian owes to the public and himself, which obliges him to say what he thinks; and which, when he obeys, his praise is corroborated by his censure. The first page of the Preface will more fully make his apology[2]; and his just

LETTER 2102.—Not in C. A copy of this letter (now among the Charlemont MSS. in the Royal Irish Academy) was sent to Lord Charlemont in 1784 as a 'literary curiosity' by Richard Livesay the painter, who lodged with Mrs. Hogarth for some years. It is here printed from the original in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 27,995, f. 25).

[1] The fourth volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*.

[2] Horace Walpole probably alludes to the first paragraph of his Preface:—'This last volume has been long written, and even printed. The publication, though a debt to the purchasers of the preceding volumes, was delayed from motives of tenderness. The author, who could not resolve, like most biographers, to dispense universal panegyric, especially on many incompetent artists, was still unwilling to utter even gentle censures, which might wound the affections, or offend the prejudices, of those related to the persons whom truth forbad him to commend beyond their merits. He hopes, that as his

admiration of Mr. Hogarth, Mr. W. flatters himself, will, notwithstanding his impartiality, still rank him in Mrs. Hogarth's mind as one of her husband's most zealous and sincere friends.

2103. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 4, 1780.

I HAVE received your packet by Mr. Sutherland, and am delighted with its contents. Your news would be much the best part, but I doubt is not so far advanced as to expect sudden effect. The history of the house of Medici will be welcome indeed. I see one has but to form wishes early, and live long enough, and they will all be fulfilled. The *Famiglia estinta*[1] made me smile. If that condition brings one acquainted with their true story, it would not make one very zealous for successors in some foreign royal families; for instance, I should not pray for issue to the Great Duke of Russia[2]. I beg you will subscribe for three sets for me and two of my friends. Mine I should like to have *carta cerulea*; not because it is the dearest, but because I do not know what it is, and therefore conclude, like the vulgar, that it is something mighty fine. I hope no soul that has interest to stop it will get an inkling of the work.

Your ring I have not yet received, though Mr. Morrice is

opinion is no standard, it will pass for mistaken judgement with such as shall be displeased with his criticisms. If his encomiums seem too lavish to others, the public will at least know that they are bestowed sincerely. He would not have hesitated to publish his remarks sooner, if he had not been averse to exaggeration.' (*Works* of Lord Orford, vol. iii. p. 398.)

LETTER 2103.—[1] It was written by Galluzzi, from authentic papers furnished by the Austrian Grand Duke Leopold; who said that, as the house of Medici was extinct, there was no reason for not writing their true story. This History was published in 1781, after the death of the Empress Queen; whose prejudices would probably have prevented it, had she known of her son's intention; as it is not at all favourable to the Court of Rome. *Walpole.*

[2] Paul, son of the Empress Catherine.

arrived. Indeed, displeased as I was at your superabundant kindness in sending it, I am now afraid I shall never possess it. All my disinterestedness could not resist dunning Mr. Morrice; and, behold, he has sent me word that by some *mal-entendu* it was packed up in his heavy baggage, which, by another, is still at Margate! Oh, how can one flatter oneself that a ring in a bottle of heavy baggage will ever be found! or, rather, will not be found and stolen by some custom-house officer! Mr. Morrice was a fine person to trust a gem to! I suppose he would have stuffed a lady's picture for her lover into a jack-boot!

General Dalrymple is arrived from Sir Henry Clinton, with heavy baggage indeed, full of bad news[3]! The *Gazette* has produced only samples strewed over with fine sugar, to make it as palatable and little bitter as possible; but the sum total is, that adieu to America! All the visions that mounted in fumes into our heads from the capture of Charleston are turned to smoke; and it were well if it would rest there. To be cured of that dream would be no calamity; but I wish we may have no collateral losses! I fear we ache in some islands, and are not quite without twitches on the continent of America. Well! as I was right in foreseeing some miserable issue from the American war, I have a mind to try my skill in foretelling peace. 'Tis sure I wish it most fervently.

Last week I was alarmed with a calamity nearer to my heart than politics. General Conway broke his arm by a fall. But I have been with him, and he is in the most favourable way possible, and has not had the smallest degree of fever.

You must reckon this short letter the second part of my

[3] 'General Dalrymple arrived from Sir H. Clinton with an account of the capture of the greatest part of the fleet going to Quebec with supplies, of the great distress at New York, and the superiority of the Americans.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 427.)

last, which was short too; or as the beginning of my next, for, if ever I get my ring, I shall certainly write again to thank you, though I should have nothing else to say. I could have made this longer, but I do not like to entertain every foreign post office with what they would not dislike.

2104. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1780.

Part the second behold already—for I have received the gem[1], which from ignorance I called a ring, and beg its pardon: it is much too large for so little an appellation, and is most beautiful too, and of exquisite sculpture. All this makes matters worse, for the finer it is, the more I am ashamed; and therefore cannot thank you half so much as it deserves. Yet I will be very grateful, upon condition of its never having a successor. You must tell me what the connoisseurs have baptized it. Is it an Apollo or an Amazon? A handsome young god and a heroine approach so much to the boundaries of the sexes, that they are not easily discriminated in so small an area. Mr. Morrice has fairly excused his delay. After he had put to sea, they apprehended a privateer; on which he sent back his baggage to Ostend, and with it his most valuable treasures. My gem has escaped all these perils, and arrived like the lost sheep. You cannot imagine how the Caligula, and the Bianca Capello, and Benvenuto's coffer, and the Castiglione[2], and all your presents, embraced and hugged it, and inquired after you. The new-comer is lodged in a glass case in *my Tribune*, over against Caligula.

As I wrote to you but two days ago—nay, my letter

Letter 2104.—[1] It was an intaglio on cornelian representing Apollo.

[2] Benedetto Castiglione, whose picture of Tobit burying the dead hung in the gallery at Strawberry Hill.

would leave London but to-night—I have no news to add: however, I may have, for this will not go hence till Tuesday morning, to be ready for that night's mail. But I was so impatient to tell you the cameo is safe, and that your munificence is not thrown away *entirely*, that I could not help beginning my letter now, though the rest of my paper must depend on the charity of accident and events: and, if they will not assist it, I do not care,—go it shall; I will not owe you a moment's gratitude that I can pay. Nay, I will heap coals of fire on my own head; for all your gifts shall be entered in the printed catalogue of my collection as your presents,—and then whoever reads it will cry, 'Why, had he no shame!'—Oh, yes, a vast deal; and this is one of his ways of doing penance.

Oct. 9th.

Since I wrote the above, I have heard from Paris of the death of my dear old friend Madame du Deffand, whom I went so often thither to see. It was not quite unexpected, and was softened by her great age, eighty-four, which forbade distant hopes; and, by what I dreaded more than her death, her increasing deafness, which, had it become, like her blindness, total, would have been living after death. Her memory only *began* to impair; her amazing sense and quickness, not at all. I have written to her once a week for these last fifteen years, as correspondence and conversation could be her only pleasures. You see that I am the most faithful letter-writer in the world—and, alas! never see those I am so constant to! One is forbidden commonplace reflections on these misfortunes, because they *are* commonplace; but is not that because they are natural? But your never having known that dear old woman is a better reason for not making you the butt of my concern.

Lord George Gordon has just got a neighbour—I believe, not a companion; for state prisoners are not allowed to be

very sociable. Laurens, lately President of the Congress, has been taken by a natural son [3] of the last Lord Albemarle, and brought to England, to London, to the Tower. He was going Ambassador to Holland, and his papers are captured too. I should think they would tell us but what we learnt a fortnight ago; and (which is more wonderful, what we would not believe *till* a fortnight ago) that there is an end of our American dream! Perhaps they will give us back a cranny in exchange for their negotiator.

I go again to-morrow to see General Conway, and hope to find him out of bed; and I finish my letter, that I may not run into meditations on what is uppermost in my mind,—mortality and its accidents!

At night.

I have just heard some news that you will like to hear, and which will make you hold up your head again a little *vis-à-vis de M. de Barbantane.* An express arrived to-day from Lord Cornwallis, who with two thousand men has attacked General Gates [4] in Carolina [5] at the head of seven thousand, and entirely defeated him, killed nine hundred, and taken one thousand prisoners; and there has since been a little codicil [6], of all which you will see the particulars in the to-morrow's *Gazette.*—But it is very late, and this must go to town early in the morning. I allow you to triumph, though Gates is my godson, and your namesake.

[3] Captain George Keppel, commanding the *Vestal* frigate.

[4] Horatio Gates, the American general, was son of an inferior officer of the revenue in England, who married a housekeeper of the second Duke of Leeds. Mrs. Gates was very intimate with the woman of Lady Walpole, Mr. H. W.'s mother, which occasioned his being godfather, then about twelve years old, to her son. Horatio Gates was put into the army, and, I think, first served in Georgia. He returned to England, and it was after his second voyage to America that, I think, on some disgust, he joined the insurgents. *Walpole.*

[5] At Camden in South Carolina on Aug. 16, 1780.

[6] The defeat of Colonel Sumpter by Colonel Tarleton at Catawba Fords, on Aug. 18, 1780.

2105. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1780.

I did not receive your letter with the fatal news, dear Sir, till yesterday morning, with two from Wiart at the same time, so that I had remained twelve days in the most cruel suspense!

Complain I must not: I had been happy in her living longer than could be expected; and my dread of her becoming deaf had constantly mixed anxiety with the satisfaction of preserving her. With these reflections I endeavour to console myself: and yet, and though prepared as I was by your foresight, I was greatly shocked at the sight of Wiart's black wax, and the melancholy contents. Bouvart's refusal of James's powder, I own, has much contributed to the impression, and I cannot forgive it, though most probably it would not have saved her. But it is not fair to weary you with my regrets.

Wiart promises me to deliver my letters to you, and a number of the *Voyage pittoresque*. It is the last thing I shall receive thence. I have great regard for some persons at Paris, but I have done with France. It was for my dearest friend alone that I kept up any connection there.

In the midst of all my anxiety for her, I received another terrible alarm. General Conway broke his left arm just below the shoulder by a fall on one of his own steep hills. I went to him immediately, and shall go again to-morrow; but he is in the fairest way possible, and has not the least symptom of fever.

I know nothing but what I see in the papers, that Lawrence, President of the Congress, has been taken going

Letter 2105.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 27–31.

to Holland, brought over, and committed to the Tower. By the last cargo of news from New York I should think his papers are taken a little too late.

The elections, they say, have turned out less favourable for the court than was expected: but I know scarce any particulars. The new Parliament is to meet only to be sworn, but will not sit till about the 15th of next month. I wish it may bring you, and consequently your son too, back.

You will excuse my brevity just now; you see, as you might conclude, that I know nothing; and my mind, if I indulged my pen, is so full of my poor lost friend that I should talk of nothing else. If, before your return, you should happen to see the Prince of Bauffremont, I should be obliged if you would ask him in what way he wishes a Chevalier de St. Sauveur, whom he has recommended to me, should be served. I have told both the Prince and him that I have no kind of interest or credit, and can only direct the latter where to apply. He is a Protestant, and yet it seems odd for a Frenchman to desire to come into our service at present. I know nothing of his history. Perhaps he has had a duel. The Prince recommended him too to my Lord Courtney—not a much better channel! and he is gone into Devonshire to learn English, which he must learn again when he has learnt Devonshire. I don't know what to do with him, and yet I received so many civilities in France, I will not neglect him. And besides the Prince was a friend of my poor dear friend, and I would do anything on earth to show my regard for and remembrance of her! You see I am returning again to that chapter.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2106. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Park Place, Oct. 10, at midnight, 1780.

I sit down after the family are gone to bed to answer your Ladyship's letter, which I received this morning as I was getting into my postchaise; and to-morrow I go to Nuneham; a visit I could not refuse as it is but sixteen miles off, and that I have not been there these two years: otherwise I am in no mood to seek or to contribute to amusement.

You did me justice, Madam, in imputing my silence to my unhappiness. My dear old friend is gone! I had been told to expect it; but the contrary wind kept me twelve days in anxious misery! and I could not help having moments of hope—now they are all destroyed. Mr. Conway's accident, too, though he is in the fairest way possible, did not diminish my concern; my spirits are so naturally good that I know they will recover without efforts; yet frequent losses of friends remind one of the discomforts of old age; but one should not attrist those who are at a distance from the precipice.

I have not heard Lady Charlotte Finch's *bon mot*, nor anything else till last night, when I learnt Lord Cornwallis's victory from those most concerned. I passed the evening with Lady Hertford at Mrs. Keene's. Lord and Lady North were there, *en cour plénière*, with Miss[1], the Queen Mother Drake[2], Mr. Williams, and Brydone[3], the Sicilian traveller, who having wriggled himself into Bushy

Letter 2106.—[1] Apparently Lord North's eldest daughter, Hon. Catherine Anne North (d. 1817); m. (1789) Sylvester Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie.

[2] Lady North's mother married secondly Sir William Drake, fourth Baronet, of Ashe in Devonshire.

[3] Patrick Brydon (d. 1818), author of a popular *Tour through Sicily and Malta*. He had been tutor to one of the Beckfords, and was Comptroller of the Stamp Office.

will, I suppose, soon be an envoy, like so many other Scots. As Lord North's poppies had been just jerked with sprigs of laurel, he was very good company, and my partner at cribbage. He has just been in Somersetshire, and let a house to a woman who petitioned for a piece more of land as her tenement had no backside. I said he had certainly not sold her a *good bargain*. This suited his humour, and he told us several more good stories. I say nothing of the victory over my godson[4]. It is all in the *Gazette*, and I suppose more. 'Tis sufficient to make us relapse into our American frenzy, which the last cargo of bad news had cooled. The conqueror talks of severity to the late renegades; he forgets his own protest on the Stamp Act[5], or perhaps chooses to wash it out with blood.

Lady Surrey[6] is not only confined, but for some time was tied down in her bed. She now walks about the house, but sometimes herself asks for the strait-waistcoat.

The Duchess of Gloucester is certainly not going abroad, to my knowledge; at least the Duke is amazingly recovered by the sea air and looks, they tell me, remarkably well.

I believe these are answers to all your Ladyship's questions, except on Lady Granard's match[7]. I did not know it or her. The last query is very kind; Boughton and Drayton I have seen, and Kirby I should like to see, but you will be returned, and the season gone, before I could reach Farming Woods. At present I will wish you good night, Madam, after thanking you again for your kindness about my poor lost friend! her not having taken James's

[4] General Gates.

[5] Lord Cornwallis was one of the four peers who supported Lord Camden in denying the English right to tax America.

[6] Frances (d. 1820), daughter and heiress of Charles Fitzroy-Scudamore, of Holme Lacy, Herefordshire; m. (1771) Charles Howard, afterwards Earl of Surrey and Duke of Norfolk.

[7] Lady Georgiana Augusta Berkeley (d. 1820), eldest daughter of fourth Earl of Berkeley; m. (1) George Forbes, fifth Earl of Granard; (2) (1781) Rev. Samuel Little.

powder adds to my sorrow, and I cannot forget it, but I have promised to say no more on that terrible subject.

2107. To the Rev. William Mason.

Nuneham, Oct. 13, 1780.

I am heartily vexed at my disappointment: I have not only not found you here, but find you will not come till I am gone. I begged you to tell me your motions, but heard not a word of you. I delayed and delayed till it grew too late in the year for me to venture being from home lest the gout should arrive. It is more provoking that you have been flinging away your time on a turnpike meeting, a certain way to be sure to overthrow despotism! I should like to see a letter from Brutus to Cassius, telling him that he hoped to stab Cæsar to the heart by setting aside a tool of the tyrant, whom he intended to make surveyor of the Appian Way. If Horace had been in a plot, I should tell him, were I Cassius, that he would have been better employed in writing a satire on——I have forgotten all my Roman history, and so I will suppose some instance that would answer to Johnson's billinsgate on Milton, or Soame Jenyns's Ode on Horace and Virgil. In short, and in plain English, you, that have no business but with immortality, are squabbling in vestries, or in elections that signify no more than vestries—are wrapping up a matchless talent in the coarse rubber of a country tavern. Prithee leave England to its folly, to its ruin, to the Scotch. They have reduced it to a skeleton, and the bones will stick in their own throats; you will find nothing but Io Pæans on Lord Cornwallis. The court has lost some elections, but who are come in but banditti—whom they will buy the first week they come to town?

I have left with Lord Harcourt for you my new old last

volume of *Painters*. You need not turn it over, for there is not a syllable you have not seen but the short preface, and shorter dedication[1]. By the latter you see I do not court popularity.

If you have a mind to be very obliging after disappointing me so much, you will make four posts more and come to Strawberry; if you do not, I hope Bishop Hurd will be Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, Mr. Smelt *intendant de la province de York*, and Dr. Johnson licenser of the press, *de par le Roi*; and then I hope you will have a mind to write again, and get nobody to print it.

P.S. This place is more Elysian than ever, the river full to the brim, and the church by one touch of Albano's pencil is become a temple, and a principal feature of one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

2108. To Charles Bedford.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, Oct. 18, 1780.

I am most exceedingly concerned at the melancholy account I have received of yourself and your family, and pity you from my heart. I wish anything I could say could give you ease and comfort, or anything I could do could relieve your anxiety—but in such afflictions we must submit to the will of God, who I fervently hope will spare those you so deservedly love. You must act like a man, bear your misfortunes with courage and patience, and take care of yourself for the sake of the rest, if any should be taken from you. I hope your tenderness and fears have made you think the danger greater than it is.

Do not think of ceremony with me, who certainly do not expect it; nor, oppressed as you are, write yourself; but let

Letter 2107.—[1] The volume was dedicated to the Duke of Richmond.

Mr. Harris send me exact accounts. I shall be anxious to hear again, but positively will not have you write yourself. Remember, I enjoin this. I never can doubt of your attention to me, and like best that you should show it now, by complying with what I desire. It will give me sincere joy to receive a better account, as I am

Most cordially yours,

Hor. Walpole.

2109. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 26, 1780.

I had heard of my dear friend's legacy, dear Sir. Madame de Cambis had wrote word of it to the D. of R.[1] Indeed even that notice was no novelty. Several years ago my dear old friend told me she should leave me her porcelain *and other things*. I assured her if she did not promise me in the most solemn manner *not* to do any such thing, I would never set my foot in France again, for that, considering her age, I should be thought to have paid court to her with that view: and I protested that, if she left me anything of value, I would immediately give up all to her family, and then perhaps what she left would not be distributed just in the manner she would have wished. After some contest, and various requests from her to name what I would accept, as her books, &c., all which I positively refused, she said, would I, at least, take her papers? To satisfy her, as there would be nothing mercenary in that acceptance, I did consent. This was during the life of Monsieur de Pont de Veille, who was to have been her executor. The last time I was at Paris she pressed me to

Letter 2109.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 31–7.

[1] The Duke of Richmond.

choose and then take some of her porcelain. I refused. She persisted. At last, to pacify her, I took one of the cheapest cups and saucers, and pretended I preferred it because it had *strawberries* on it, and it is now in this room. I believe Monsieur Wiart must remember that transaction, and probably all the rest I have been telling you. I am not sure, but I think I recollect her desiring me to accept the box with her dog's picture; and, as it is, I believe, a trifle, I shall not decline it.

The papers, as there are many of her own writing, will be infinitely dear to me. I know them all well. There are letters and characters and portraits, &c., and her correspondence with Voltaire, and a volume or two of miscellaneous verses, and much of the Chev. de Boufflers. They will all be in very safe hands. I not only revere Madame du Deffand's memory, but her friends may be assured that *she* shall not be blamed for having bequeathed them to an Englishman. I will show that I deserved her confidence, and that I am not unworthy of the civilities I received in France. I mean that, though her papers are and could be only trifles of society, they will remain as secret as if they were of the highest importance. It will be a melancholy pleasure in my solitude to read what I have often perused with her in her room. But I shall not communicate what indeed few here would understand. In one word, I can have no greater satisfaction than in paying every positive or negative mark of respect to her dear memory. I beg your pardon for troubling you with this detail, but it was necessary; and I must entreat you, dear Sir, to repeat as much of it, or all, as may be necessary, to Madame du Deffand's friends, in particular to the Prince de Beauvau, to whom I beg you will make my compliments, and tell them that, though I value most exceedingly the Chev. de Boufflers's letters, yet, if there are any which the Prince

may wish not to be sent to me, I consent to his retaining them. It is an attention which I should wish to receive, and therefore ought to pay. Madame du Deffand always expressed the utmost gratitude for the Prince's unaltered friendship, and I think I do not violate her last wish by paying that compliment to her friend. I shall beg you to receive whatever he delivers to you. I will write to Mon^sr. D'Aulan[2], the nephew, on Tuesday: but it is impossible to-night, so I beg you will tell him; and then I will authorize him to trust you with everything, which I shall beg you to keep till you come.

I have scarce anything to tell you, for I have not been in town this month; and here I see none but old women. The Parliament is to meet on Tuesday, and go on business as soon as the members are sworn. I have heard that the opposition intend to propose Sir Fl. Norton for Speaker (for Fred. Montagu's health will not let him undertake it) and that the court will set up some one else whom I do not know. Lord Cornwallis's victory revived our martial ardour at first, but it rather seems to cool again. Last week the stocks imagined peace with Spain was near; but that seems blown over too. However, I only talk from newspapers and their echoes. Lord Carlisle and Eden certainly go to Ireland[3]. Sir John Mordaunt is dead, as I heard this evening. General Conway, I hope, is out of bed by this time: he has not had the least fever. Lord Macartney has carried his point of going to India. Lord Bute and Mackinsy are both out of Parliament.

This is the sum total of my knowledge; for, in truth, I do not go a step out of my way to inquire after news, and seldom have any till it has been in print. I wrote a long letter to Wiart with some questions about my dear old

[2] The Marquis d'Aulan, nephew and heir of Madame du Deffand.

[3] As Viceroy and Chief Secretary respectively.

friend, which, I hope, he received and will answer. He told me she had acted kindly by him. I knew her intentions on that head and towards all her servants. When you return, which I should hope would be soon and with satisfaction, you must allow me to talk a little about her, which I will not do now, though I can scarce refrain. I hope not a line of hers will be detained from me, especially the written portraits. She had many most entertaining letters from the Abbé Barthélemi, of which I was very fond too. I repeat how careful I shall be of everything. As I outlive my friends, my greatest pleasure is thinking and talking of them. What is past is much more dear to me than anything that is passing now. And, begging the present time's pardon, I do not think I am much in the wrong! Your son is one of the very few that could replace any of those that I loved and are gone: but I shall not make him so bad a compliment as to offer him the friendship of a superannuated man.

2110. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1, 1780.

I have suspected for some time, Madam, that I am growing superannuated, and now I am sure of it, for I don't know what I say. I certainly did not, if I told your Ladyship that I was going to Nuneham for a *fortnight*. I meant to stay but two nights, and literally did stay but three; and the reason I gave you, not having been there in two years, was the worst reason I had to give, another proof of dotage; for besides the visit to Lord and Lady Harcourt, to whom I certainly have great obligations, my journey comprehended two visits (going and coming) to Mr. Conway, who still kept his bed; and moreover I was to meet Mr. Mason at Nuneham. All this is not an

excuse of myself, but an accusation. Your Ladyship's is not quite so just. You know I offered myself at Ampthill first, and your election, and then your immediate removal to Farming Woods, prevented my paying my first duty to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory; and when I pleaded a debt to Lord Harcourt, I did and could mean nothing but the specific moment in which I was to go to him. Different fits of illness, and close confinement have interrupted several intended journeys to Ampthill; and all last year I was literally not out of my own house once, no, not once—I mean, not to sleep anywhere else. I certainly am better at present than I have been these five years, and, if it continues, will indubitably wait on you; it shall certainly be the first visit I will pay anywhere.

As I have been returned above a fortnight I should have written had I had a syllable to tell you; but what could I tell you from that melancholy and very small circle at Twickenham Park, almost the only place I do go to in the country, partly out of charity, and partly as I have scarce any other society left which I prefer to it; for, without entering on too melancholy a detail, recollect, Madam, that I have outlived most of those to whom I was habituated, Lady Hervey, Lady Suffolk, Lady Blandford—my dear old friend[1], I should probably never have seen again—yet that is a deeper loss, indeed! She has left me all her MSS.—a compact between us—in one word I had, at her earnest request, consented to accept them, on condition she should leave me nothing else. She had, indeed, intended to leave me her little all, but I declared I would never set foot in Paris again (this was ten years ago) if she did not engage to retract that destination. To satisfy her, I at last agreed to accept her papers, and one thin gold box with the portrait of her dog. I have written to beg her dog itself, which is

Letter 2110.—[1] Madame du Deffand.

so cross, that I am sure nobody else would treat it well; and I have ordered her own servant, who read all letters to her, to pick out all the letters of living persons, and restore them to the several writers without my seeing them.

Were I vain-glorious, to be sure I might have boasted of passing a second evening with Lord and Lady North—nay, at their own palace[2]. Perhaps you will think I am going to be swaddled in ermine in my dotage like old Brudenel[3]; but be assured, Madam, that I do not design to have robes and a coronet laid on my deathbed like Lord Hunsdon[4].

I came to town on Sunday to pay my duty to the Duke of Gloucester, who, however, did not arrive till last night. I never saw him look so well and so robust. He returns on Saturday to stay till after Christmas: so shall I, but for only two or three days, as all my few acquaintance have left my neighbourhood, and as I do not think it prudent, at this critical time of the year, for me to be much in the country. I may be in a busy scene here for aught I know, but I take care to have no business with it. Another phœnix, just like its predecessor, is risen from the ashes of the last Parliament; and I suppose will have the final honour of consuming its own nest. Lord Ossory, I conclude, is arrived, and will tell you particulars of which I am informed only by the newspapers.

George[5] I have seen in his paternal mansion, and drank tea with him and his adopted babe and its governess, and

[2] Bushey Park.

[3] Hon. James Brudenel, brother of the Duke of Montagu, recently created a baron at the age of fifty-five.

[4] Henry Carey (d. 1596), first Baron Hunsdon. It was said that he wished to be Earl of Wiltshire, and that Queen Elizabeth (his cousin) 'visited him during his last illness and presented him with the patent of the new title and the robes of an earl, but that Hunsdon declined both, on the ground that honours of which the Queen deemed him unworthy in his lifetime were not worthy of his acceptance on his deathbed.' (*D. N. B.*)

[5] George Selwyn.

Mr. Storer. He goes every night at nine to the new Irish Queen's[6] *couchée.*

Your 'Barbary traveller' is probably an ape of Mr. Bruce, and hopes to lie himself unto 7,000*l.* I can sooner believe that savages eat living beef-steaks than that they imitate our pitiful European vice of insincerity. The impulse of nature may make us knock out the brains of an enemy; but it must be long-tutored, and civilized, and polished, and refined, before we sell our country and posterity for a mess of pottage.

As your Ladyship has long had the bulk of my book, my last volume (and *last* volume it shall be), it was not worth while to send it to you for the addition of two or three pages; but since you desire it, if I am so lucky as to see Lord Ossory, he shall have it.

2111. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 1, 1780.

I own I was heartily vexed at your not letting me know when you would be at Nuneham, that I might have contrived to meet you there, but what you have sent me would wash out any stain—*all the perfumes of Arabia do sweeten your little hand, the grey goose quill that is therein* (for, as Millamant[1] says, I am very fond of the poets to-day) *in his heart's blood is wet.* When you write *so* you may let the world want the rest of your blank verse and leave me to be

He who erewhile the happy gardens sung.

Yes, I am solicitous about your immortal fame, and care about little else. Tully's last works buoyed up when all his

[6] The Countess of Carlisle, whose husband had recently been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Letter 2111. — [1] In Congreve's *Way of the World.*

patriot endeavours sunk in the common shore of his country. This country is as lost as his, and nothing can save it. Do you want a new instance? Dr. Hunter, that Scotch nightman, had the impudence t'other day to pour out at his anatomic lecture a more outrageous Smeltiad than Smelt himself, and imputed all our disgraces and ruin to the opposition. Burke was present, and said he had heard of political arithmetic, but never before of political anatomy, yet for a Scot to dare thus in the heart of London, and be borne, is proof enough that the nation itself is lost beyond redemption. The new Parliament, as I foresaw it would be, is exactly what the last was. Do you require a proof of that too, besides the same standing majority? Here is one: Rigby, who exactly this time twelvemonth tried to betray and blow up the administration, was yesterday its Drawcansir, and I hope you allow he at least can descry the better of the lay. Charles Fox indeed told Lord George Germaine that he was a coward as he had always been, and was stabbing in the dark; yet surely that was unjust: Mr. Adam and Mr. Fullarton attempted to stab in open daylight—we are above *détours*.

I know no news but that the Prince of Wales is to have a bit of an establishment; yet his court is still to be kept in the nursery. However, there will be a little more room; for the Right Reverend Father in God, Prince Frederic[2], is to be weaned and sent abroad.

His Holiness the Archbishop had much ado last night to christen Prince Alfred[3]. I wonder, as everybody is equally fit for everything, that they did not make the pontiff and the wet-nurse change offices. Sir John Mordaunt's red ribbon is to be given to Rodney, and not to Lord Cornwallis—I suppose because not crimson enough for him. There!

[2] He was Bishop of Osnaburg.
[3] The King's youngest son; born Sept. 22; he died in 1782.

I am glad I have got through the chapter of politics; here is something better:—

> When Macreth served in Arthur's crew,
> He said to Rumbold, 'Black my shoe,'
> To which he answer'd, 'Ay, Bob.'
> But when return'd from India's land,
> And grown too proud to brook command,
> He sternly answer'd, 'Nay, Bob.'

I am told this is at least three years old, no matter; good ink like wine is not the worse for age.

I wish you had told me, if you did not find Nuneham in more beauty than ever. I do not know the paradise on earth I prefer to it, with its Adam and Eve; who may comfort themselves with having no children, when they recollect that the first-born committed murder *with the jaw-bone of an ass*, a deadly weapon I am sure!

Quaker or not, I do object to my valuable *researches*: I never searched anywhere but in foolish books, and for no end but to divert myself. It is such folk as Dr. Milles that *research*; and when they have tumbled out of their depth, call their fall—elucidations. I never pretended to anything; I never did anything that signified, and I will not subscribe to compliments, which would look as if I liked them. Yet I do not pretend to be humble, nor to dislike flattery; but then I choose to flatter myself—for that is the only flattery that is ever severe. I do not ask when you will come to town, for then perhaps you will tell me.

With duty to Miss Fauquier. How I delight to see her

> Throw her broad black exterminating eye,
> And crush some new gilt courtier's loyal lie.

P.S. I am reading l'Abbé Richard's *Voyage d'Italie*, in six volumes. He pretends to give an account of the history and governments of the several states, and though it is

heavy, it is not bad; but one passage diverted me: speaking of Piperno the Privernum of the Volsci, he mentions Camilla as a parishioner there, and says, 'L'histoire de cette belle guerrière (in Virgil) mérite d'être lue.' There is a *research* for you. In the eighteenth century we can cite Virgil for true story, as Caxton did three hundred years ago.

2112. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 2, 1780.

If the word *new Parliament* did not impose a sort of duty on me—at least, if you would not expect it—I think I should scarce write to you yet, for I have nothing to tell you but that *il ne valoit pas la peine de changer*. There are several new members, but no novelty in style or totality of votes. The court may have what number it chooses to buy. It has nominated a new Speaker, Mr. Cornwall. Sir Fletcher, who never haggles with shame, published his own disgrace, and declared he had been laid aside without notice. Courts do not always punish their own profligates so justly.

There is no new public event at home or from abroad. The Spanish negotiation does not seem to advance at all. Prince Frederic, the Bishop, is going to Germany; and then the Prince of Wales is to have something of a family.

Our old acquaintance Lord Pomfret, whose madness has lain dormant for some time, is broken out again; I mean, his madness is. He went down to Euston last week, and challenged the Duke of Grafton for an affront offered to him, he said, when the Duke was minister—you know what an age ago that was. The Duke declared his innocence, and advised him to consider on it. He did for two days; then said he was now cool, yet insisted on satisfaction. The Duke gave both letters to a magistrate, and then swore the peace against him; the only rational thing to be done.

The Earl some years ago had many of these flippancies, and used to call out gentlemen in the playhouse, who he pretended had made faces at him. As madmen are generally cunning and malicious, it was generally such as looked unlikely to resent, whom he picked out. Once he unluckily selected General Moyston, and, drawing his curtains early in the morning, bade him rise and follow him into Hyde Park, for having laughed at him at court. Moyston denied having even seen him there. 'Oh, then, it is very well,' said my Lord. 'No, by God, is not it,' replied the General; 'you have disturbed me when I had been in bed but three hours, and now *you* shall give *me* satisfaction:' but the Earl begged to be excused. There was a Mr. Palmes Robinson, who used to say publicly that he had often got Lord Pomfret as far as Hyde Park Corner, but never could get him any farther.

I was unfortunately not come to town last week, when one of your nephews, a Foote, called here, and left word he was going to you, and should set out the next morning. I was much concerned at hearing it too late.

Mr. Windham I have seen. He is wonderfully recovered, and looks robust again. He said ten thousand fine things in your praise. Oh! thought I; but said nothing. Mr. Morrice I have not yet seen: he is confined in the country by the gout, and I hear looks dreadfully.

I have seen lately in the Abbé Richard's *Voyage d'Italie*, written in 1762, that in the Palace Pitti were preserved two large volumes of the travels of Cosimo III, with views of the houses he had been at; and he names England amongst them, where he certainly was. Could you find out if there is such a thing, and get a sight of it? I should be very curious to know what English seats are there. Old English mansions are great objects with me—but do not give yourself much trouble about this request.

3rd.

You perceive that I am not likely to have great Parliamentary news to tell you. This week they are only being sworn in. The first debate in the Commons was to be next Monday, but probably will not, for last night Lord North was very ill of a fever. They can no more go on without their Treasurer, than without their pensions. Sir Horace the second, I take for granted, will tell you of the common debates. I do not mean to relax myself, but seldom know much of their details, which I think of little consequence; and rather reserve myself for confirming or contradicting reports of considerable events.

2113. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 11, 1780.

I am afraid you are not well, my good Sir; for you are so obligingly punctual, that I think you would have acknowledged the receipt of my last volume, if you were not out of order.

Lord Dacre lent me the new edition of Mr. Gough's *Typography*[1], and the ancient maps and quantity of additions tempted me to buy it. I have not gone through much above half of the first volume, and find it more entertaining than the first edition. This is no partiality, for I think he seems rather disposed, though civilly, to find cavils with me. Indeed, in the passage in which I am most mentioned, he not only gives a very confused, but quite a wrong account; as in other places, he records some trifles in my possession not worth recording—but I know that we antiquaries are too apt to think that whatever has had the honour of entering our ears, is worthy of being laid before the eyes of everybody else. The story I mean is p. xl of the preface.

Letter 2113.—[1] So in MS.

Now the three volumes of drawings and tombs, by Mr. Lethueillier and Sir Charles Fredericke, for which Mr. Gough says I refused two hundred pounds, and are now Lord Bute's —are not Lord Bute's, but mine, and for which I never was asked two hundred pounds, and for which I gave sixty pounds—full enough. The circumstances were much more entertaining than Mr. G.'s perplexed account. Bishop Lyttelton told me Sir Charles Fredericke complained of Mr. L.'s not bequeathing them to him, as he had been a joint labourer with him; and that Sir Charles wished I would not bid against him for them, as they were to be sold by auction. I said this was a very reasonable request, and that I was ready to oblige Sir Charles; but that, as I heard others meant to bid high for the books, I should wish to know how far he would go, and that I would not oppose him—but should the books exceed the price Sir Charles was willing to give, I should like to be at liberty to bid for them against others—'however,' added I, 'as Sir Charles (who lived then in Berkeley Square, as I did then in Arlington Street) passes by my door every time he goes to the House of Commons, if he will call on me, we will make such agreement'—you will scarce believe the sequel. The dignity of Sir Charles Fredericke was hurt that I should propose his making me the first visit, though to serve himself—nothing could be less[2] out of my imagination than the ceremonial of visits; though when he was so simple as to make a point of it, I could not see how in any light I was called on to make the first visit—and so the treaty ended; and so I bought the books.

There was another work, I think in two volumes, which was their diary of their tour, with a few slight views. Bishop Lyttelton proposed them to me, and engaged to get them for me from Mr. Lethueillier's sister for ten guineas.

[2] So in MS.

She hesitated, the Bishop died, I thought no more of them, and they may be what Lord Bute has.

There is another assertion in Mr. Gough, which I can authentically contradict. He says Sir Matthew Decker first introduced ananas, p. 134. My very curious picture of Rose, the royal gardener, presenting the first ananas to Charles II proves the culture here earlier by several years.

P. 373, he seems to doubt my assertion of Gravelot's[3] making drawings of tombs in Gloucestershire, because he never met with any engravings from them. I took my account from Vertue, who certainly knew what he said. I bought at Vertue's own sale some of Gravelot's drawings of our regal monuments, which Vertue engraved—but, which is stronger, Mr. Gough himself a few pages after, viz. in p. 387, mentions Gravelot's drawing of Tewkesbury church—which being in Gloucestershire, Mr. G. might have believed me that Gravelot did draw in that county. This is a little like Mr. Masters's being angry with me for taking liberties with bishops and chancellors, and then abusing grossly one who had been both bishop and chancellor.

I forgot that in the note on Sir Ch. Fred., Mr. Gough calls Mr. Worseley, Wortley.

In page 354, he says Rooker[4] exhibited a drawing of Waltham Cross to the Royal Academy of Sciences—pray where is that Academy? I suppose he means that of painting?

I find a few omissions; one very comical; he says Penshurst was celebrated by Ben Jonson—and seems totally in the dark as to how much more fame it owes to Waller. We antiquaries are a little apt to get laughed at for knowing what everybody has forgotten, and for being ignorant of

[3] Hubert François Bourgignon, known as Gravelot (1699–1773), a celebrated draughtsman. He lived in England from 1732 until 1745.

[4] Michael Rooker (1743–1801), engraver and watercolour painter, elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1770. He was for some time chief scene-painter at the Haymarket Theatre.

what every child knows. Do not tell him of these things, for I do not wish to vex him. I hope I was mistaken, and shall hear that you are well.

Yours ever,
H. W.

2114. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 16, 1780.

It will, I am sensible, Madam, look like paying your Ladyship for your compliments, and that will look like swallowing them greedily; and yet I must instantly tell you how very much I am charmed with, and applaud your letter to Mr. Stonhewer. I cannot select such apt words as your own; it was *noble, simple, genuine.* Those epithets belong to handsome actions, not to trifling writings. I do not know what the House of Lords will do; nor have I heard that they know yet. They have appointed a Committee on the affair[1].

Mr. Fitzpatrick's last reply to Adam[2] was excellent; but methinks the man on the white horse in the Revelations,

Letter 2114.—[1] Lord Pomfret's challenge to the Duke of Grafton (see letter to Mann of Nov. 2, 1780). On Nov. 6 Lord Pomfret was committed to the Tower by the House of Lords; on Nov. 13 'Lord Pomfret made his submission and petitioned the House of Lords for his liberty. They appointed a Committee to draw up the terms of his reprimand, submission, and assurance of pursuing his resentment no further against the Duke of Grafton or anybody else; all which he executed on the 17th and was released' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 432). As Mr. Stonhewer was the secretary and intimate friend of the Duke of Grafton, Lady Ossory's former husband, she had probably applied to him for information relative to the affair, which was finally settled on the day after the date of this letter.

[2] William Adam, M.P. for Wigton Burghs, who had fought a duel with Fox. He complained in the House of Commons of an advertisement of the Westminster Association, proclaiming their intention of guarding Fox's invaluable life, and took it as pointing at himself. Fitzpatrick said 'he heartily agreed with the resolution of the Westminster Committee as expressed in the advertisement referred to; that if the honourable gentleman chose to apply any part of it to himself, he must use his pleasure, though there was nothing personal mentioned on the face of it.' (See *Gent. Mag.* 1780, p. 540.)

whose name, I think, was Death, is gone forth! I am sorry it is *a white horse*. That did not use to be the colour on which revenge rode; but everything is so confounded now, that one does not know a white horse from a white rose.

A good courtier, yesterday, sang the praises to me of that atrocious villain, Arnold, who, he said, till he heard of André's[3] execution, would not discover the persons at New York, with whom Washington was in secret correspondence; then indeed he did. Only think of the monster! I hope he will be a Privy Councillor! betraying to Sir Harry Clinton, in the height of his indignation for André, the wretched poor souls cooped up in New York, who are guilty of that correspondence. When I expressed my horror at such bloody treachery, and said I did not doubt but Lord Cornwallis's savage executions had hurried on André's fate, and were, besides cruel, indiscreet; the same apologist said, 'Oh, we have more prisoners of theirs than they have of ours.' How tender to their *own friends*, who they do not care if hanged, provided they can spill more buckets of blood! I know nothing of poor André; he is much commended, but so he would be if as black as Arnold.

I am far from guessing why Mr. Sherlock[4] does not write in his own language, unless it is for the reason your Ladyship so luckily guesses. I should think everybody in this age could write best in his own. Formerly, before the

[3] Major John André (1751–1780), Clinton's Adjutant-General. He was employed by Clinton to negotiate with the American, Benedict Arnold, who offered to give up the fort at West Point to the English. The final arrangements were made by Arnold and André on the night of Sept. 21, 1780. André fell into the hands of the Americans on his way back to the British lines. His capture was reported to Arnold, who at once escaped to the British sloop *Vulture*, on which André had come up the Hudson River. André was condemned as a spy by a board of officers, and was hanged on Oct. 2, 1780.

[4] Rev. Martin Sherlock (d. 1797), at this time Chaplain to Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol, Bishop of Derry; afterwards Archdeacon of Killala. He travelled on the Continent, and published *Lettres d'un Voyageur anglais* at Geneva in 1779, and *Consiglio ad un Giovane Poeta* at Naples in the same year.

Babel of languages that overwhelmed the Latin were settled into some idiom, folks wrote better in the tongue of the Romans than they could in their own hodge-podge; but that is no longer the case. Mr. Sherlock's Italian is ten times worse than his French, and more bald. He by no means wants parts, but a good deal more judgement.

I am not got abroad again yet, but think I shall in two or three days: nor have I heard anything new, or more than I tell you; except its being said now that Lord George Gordon will not be tried this term.

2115. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 20, 1780.

As I apprised you that the new Parliament did not promise to be very active, you will account for my having told you none of its proceedings. It has been more confined to personalities than divisions. The latter have proved much in favour of the court: but then some of the chiefs of the opposition have in a manner seceded, not from their party, but from action; and less from change than from disagreement. Lord Pomfret, after a week's imprisonment in the Tower, made his submission, has been reprimanded, and released on giving his honour (a madman's honour!) not to repeat his offence. The grand jury have found the bill of high treason against his fellow-prisoner Lord George Gordon, who, however, will not be tried till after Christmas. I do not know why.—So much for Parliament.

The newspapers have told you as much as I know of Arnold's treachery, which has already cost the life of a much better man, Major André—precipitated probably by Lord Cornwallis's cruelty. You hear, you on the Continent, but too much of our barbarity; the only way in which we have yet shown our power! Rodney found Rhode Island so

strongly fortified that he returned to the West Indies; and yet we still presume on recovering America!

Do you wonder that, witness to so much delusion and disgrace, it should grow irksome to me to be the annalist of our follies and march to ruin? I cannot, like our newspapers, falsify every event, and coin prophecies out of bad omens. My friendship for you makes me persist in our correspondence; but tenderness for my country makes me abhor detailing its errors, and regard to truth will not allow me to assert what I do not believe. I wait for events, that I may send you something; and yet my accounts are dry and brief, because I confine myself to avowed facts, without comments or credulity. My society is grown very narrow, and it is natural at sixty-three not to concern myself in the private history of those that might be my grandchildren. Even their sallies become less splendid as opulence is vanished; and, though national follies forerun and contribute to the decline of a great country, they stop with it, not from repentance, but impotence. 'Tis insolent power that tramples on laws and morals. Poverty is only vicious by imitation, or refractory from oppression. Robbery, indeed, continues at high-water mark, though the army and navy have drawn off such hosts of outlaws and vagrants. That they have successors, proves the increase of want.

22nd.

There was an odd interlude yesterday in the House of Commons. Some of the opposition proposed to thank the late Speaker, Sir Fletcher. Lord North had promised not to gainsay it. Neither side could admire such a worthless fellow: those he has left, less than those that have adopted him; and yet the vote of thanks passed by a majority of forty—and so one may be thanked for being a rogue on all sides! If thanks grow cheaper, they will at least be more

striking when bestowed on the worthy; for every one will say, 'Such an one *does* deserve praise.'

It looks a little as if we should quarrel downright with the Dutch[1]. I do not wonder that we mind so little an enemy more or less; for, numerous as our foes are, they certainly are very awkward. We hurt ourselves a thousand times more than they do. We have done nothing that signifies a straw; but they have done less.

2116. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 24, 1780.

I am sorry I was so much in the right in guessing you had been ill—but at our age there is little sagacity in such divination. In my present holidays from the gout, I have a little rheumatism, or some of those accompaniments.

I have made several more notes to the new *Typography*, but none of consequence enough to transcribe. It is well it is a book only for the adept, or the scorners would often laugh. Mr. Gough, speaking of some cross that has been removed, says, 'There is now *an unmeaning market-house* in its place.' Saving his reverence and our prejudices, I doubt there is a good deal more *meaning* in a market-house than in a cross. They tell me that there are numberless mistakes. Mr. Pennant, whom I saw yesterday, says so. *He* is not one of our plodders; rather the other extreme: his *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them *animal*) do not allow him time to digest anything. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity—and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood everything that lay between them.

Letter 2115. — [1] This state of things was due to the discovery of the plan of a treaty of alliance between the United States and Holland among the papers of Henry Laurens, captured at sea by Captain Keppel in September.

These adventures divert me who am got on shore, and find how sweet it is to look back on those who are toiling in deep waters, whether in ships, or cock-boats, or on old rotten planks. I am sorry for the Dean of Exeter[1]. If he dies, I conclude the leaden mace of the Antiquarian Society will be offered to Judge Barrington,

Et simili frondescet Virga metallo.

I endeavoured to give our antiquaries a little wrench towards taste—but it was in vain. Sandby and our engravers of views have lent them a great deal—but there it stops. Captain Grose's dissertations are as dull and silly as if they were written for the Ostrogoth maps at the beginning of the new *Typography*; and which are so square and so incomprehensible, that they look as if they were ichnographies of the New Jerusalem.

I am delighted with having done with the professions of author and printer, and intend to be most comfortably lazy, I was going to say idle (but that would not be new), for the rest of my days. If there was a peace, I would build my offices—if there is not soon, we shall be bankrupt—nay, I do not know what may happen as it is—well! Mr. Grose will have plenty of ruins to engrave! The Royal Academy will make a fine mass, with what remains of old Somerset House.

Adieu! my good Sir. Let me know you are well. You want nothing else, for you can always amuse yourself, and do not let the foolish world disturb you.

Yours most sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

Letter 2116.—[1] Dr. Milles.

2117. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Sunday, Nov. 26, 1780.

My aches are not so mighty, Madam, as to merit your obliging inquiry after them; they come and go, and are rather omens of crippletude than positive evils. One should not mention marks of decay as illness, for is there a remedy for old age? I do not condemn Medea, who knew there was no other than chopping her father into cutlets. Miss Vernon's disorder is of consequence; beauty and youth should be tended; I am sure she will want no attention at Ampthill.

I may totter as much as I please; I believe the dowagers on either hand of me have a very different idea of me; at least if they keep watch and ward at their windows, as dowagers sometimes do. Two mornings ago they might have seen me receive, first, Dr. Hunter, and a moment after, Lady Craven—a man-midwife and so pretty a woman are very creditable; and yet, alas! he came to talk to me about Greek medals, and she of a new comedy she is writing.

A still odder thing happened at night: I asked Lady Bute who this Prince Callimanco[1] is (for so I am sure the mob will call him) who is coming from Naples. 'Lord,' said she, 'don't you know? Why, he is the favourite of the Queen of Naples[2].' 'That I should have thought,' said I, 'would rather be a reason for his *not* coming.' 'Oh,' said she, 'I suppose she is tired of him.' Should one have expected, that of all living beings *that* would have been a topic for Lord Bute's wife to have tapped! The same night, at Lady Holdernesse's, I saw Lady Grantham: as she is not *my* wife, I really think her very tolerable. She was well dressed, behaved like a human creature, and not

Letter 2117.—[1] Prince Caramanico, the newly appointed Envoy from the King of Naples.

[2] Maria Caroline, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa; m. (1768) Ferdinand IV, King of Naples; d. 1814.

like her sister[3] or a college-tutor. Her Lord is to kiss hands to-morrow as First Lord of Trade.

I do not find that Lord Deerhurst[4] is dead yet, nor has lost his eye; but the surgeons despair of him.

We and Holland grow very fractious. We bully, and so we have done before, and then drew in our horns: they will not mind, nor I dare to say go to war with us; but do us all the hurt they can. They have offered us another bitter pill[5]; and I am sure we kicked[6] at that with all possible temper. His Majesty asked his Lordship, Master Fred[7], the new Lord Lieutenant, whether he should swallow it. Master Fred, who has been Lord Lieutenant about six thousand—seconds, advised King George not to take such a nasty potion, and so King George has begged to be excused; and so I suppose the Dutch agent will go to Ireland, whether they will or not; and Master Eden will be ready to offer to make it up as he did in America. *Ma foi, vive la dignité!* We have bullied ourselves, as the vulgar say, out of house and home, and solve all by saying, 'I won't say I have been in the wrong.'

There is a new comedy, called *The Generous Impostor*,

[3] Lady Amabel Yorke (d. 1833), eldest daughter of second Earl of Hardwicke by his wife, Lady Jemima Grey, *suo jure* Marchioness Grey; m. (1772) Alexander Hume Campbell, Viscount Polwarth, eldest son of third Earl of Marchmont. She succeeded her mother as Baroness Lucas of Crudwell in 1797, and was created Countess de Grey in 1816.

[4] George William Coventry (1758–1831), Viscount Deerhurst, eldest son of sixth Earl of Coventry, whom he succeeded in 1809. He had had a terrible fall out hunting. Mrs. Boscawen, in a letter to Mrs. Delany of Nov. 27, 1780, writes: 'It was a sort of bravado to show how high a leap his horse could take, for the hounds were not running nor the huntsmen pursuing. All was at a stand, which gave this unfortunate young man leisure to attempt impossibilities: he had leaped over hedges to and fro with success, but at last attempted a very high white rail, the boundary of a riding in Ditchley Wood. He was carried to Woodstock in a most dreadful condition.'

[5] The Dutch Envoy had been instructed to demand that a Dutch agent should reside in Ireland, thus showing that the Dutch considered Ireland as independent.

[6] So in the second edition of the Letters to Lady Ossory, but the word is probably 'keck' = to reject with loathing. Swift uses the verb to keck in the literal sense of objecting to take pills.

[7] Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle.

which Mrs. Crewe and all Sheridan's protectors protect, though he did not write it; but I hear it is most indifferent. It is a translation or imitation of *Le Dissipateur*[8].

Lord Macartney's speech pleased much at the India House, and I hear his chance improves[9], of which I am very glad. It is said that the Nabob of Arcot has literally bought four members of Parliament to guard his interests—I thought he had taken much higher precautions. I like this purchase, as we are grown perfectly ridiculous and contemptible—the more we grow so, the more diverting. When we have Cardinals, I suppose they will be protectors of different nations as at Rome: Cardinal Hurd of the Duke of Mecklenburgh[10], and Cardinal Cornwallis of the Pope.

Monday.

Keith Stewart[11] arrived on Saturday in a dismal way, and with a dismal account. He was forced to push to England to save his ship from foundering, saw three others of Rowley's fleet[12] dismasted and four missing. All this is hushed up as much as possible, lest we should be frightened and not continue to knock our heads against stone walls, and wintry oceans, and fatal climates. We tremble, too, in whispers about D'Estaing's and Guichen's[13] junction. The Duke of Northumberland, who never was old till a fortnight ago, had an audience on Friday to have leave to resign[14] from infirmity, but, as that is no incapacity, he was pressed to stay, and was convinced.

[8] By Destouches; the adaptation was by Rev. Thomas O'Beirne, afterwards Bishop of Meath.

[9] He was a candidate for the post of Governor of Madras, to which he was appointed in this month.

[10] Hurd was a court favourite, and the Duke of Mecklenburg Strelitz was brother of Queen Charlotte.

[11] Captain (afterwards Admiral) Hon. Keith Stewart (1739–1795), sixth son of sixth Earl of Galloway. He was in command of the *Berwick*.

[12] Admiral Rowley had been instructed to provide for the safety of the trade homeward bound from the West Indies.

[13] Luc Urbain du Bouexic (1712–1790), Comte de Guichen, 'Lieutenant-Général des Armées Navales.' He joined D'Estaing at Cadiz at the end of October.

[14] He was Master of the Horse; he resigned in Dec. 1780.

I dined with the Lucans yesterday. After dinner Lord Clermont informed us that in the course of his reading, he had found that Scipio first introduced the use of toothpicks from Spain. I did not know so much; nor that his Lordship ever did read, or knew that Scipio was anybody but a race-horse. His classic author, probably, is *Marsh upon the Gums*. Lord Melbourne is to be a viscount, and in time will read—*en voilà pour aujourd'hui!*

2118. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1780.

I was most agreeably surprised the other day, dear Sir, by a visit from your son, whom I little expected. He tells me you will be here too at the beginning of the year; but I fear his arrival is no omen of your coming soon. I have since received yours of the 12th, with one enclosed from the Prince of Beauvau, with which I am not at all pleased. There are mighty fine compliments, but those are not what I want. He says 'if there are any portraits or characters qui paroissent compromettre quelqu'un, et qui pourraient par conséquence blesser la mémoire de notre amie, he shall les mettre à part.' *That* I by no means consent to. I told him I desired to have every scrap of her writing or dictating, and, when I so readily relinquished all letters of living persons, he might be sure that I should show nothing that would hurt anybody, and am as little likely to occasion any reflection on my dear friend for having left them to me. I beg you will mention this civilly to the Prince, and that I should be hurt at having it supposed, with my extreme regard for Madame du Deffand, that I should let any such thing appear. I do not care to write to him myself, as

Letter 2118.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 37–41.

I should conceal but ill how much such a paragraph wounds me. I pique myself on my tenderness for her, and the Prince affects to act it for me, and sends back my own words as a sop to quiet me. I have seen the portraits and characters over and over; and, as she chose I should have them, I shall never give my consent to relinquishing them; and they are certainly less liable to be seen in England, where they excite no curiosity, than in France. He says too she gave him leave to have copies of what he pleased. In that case, I may bid adieu to your bringing them over! You may guess what I think of all this! My idea of wills is perhaps particular.—Indeed I have seen by other instances that it is so.

I received from Wiart one of the most touching and sensible letters I ever saw, indeed the most simply eloquent; it shows how he had imbibed his dear mistress's natural style. But he mistook me in one point, and thence occasioned your doing, dear Sir, what I by no means meant. In his first letter, he made many humble apologies for writing to me. I told him that I was very far from having any such foolish pride, and that his attachment to his mistress levelled all distinction: that I should be always glad to hear from him and of his welfare, and that he needed not make any secret of my writing to him. He understood this as a desire in me that he should show my letter, as a proof of my grief, which was not at all my meaning, and I suppose it will be thought ostentation, which I despise. I had infinite reason to love my dearest old friend; I would do anything to show regard and respect to her memory; but I have lived too long, and am too near going myself, to value vain-glory. And, as the late Duke of Cumberland said wisely, when he became unpopular, 'I recollected in the height of my popularity that Admiral Vernon had been popular too.'

I told you, on misinformation at Richmond, that Lord Macartney had got the Government of Madras. The election is not over yet.

I cannot tell you a syllable more than you see in the public papers. We are thanking, or accusing, or abusing with our usual judgement. I say, as was the way formerly, the accused should cry: 'I appeal to a General Council.'

I was diverted at the French astonishment at Lord Pomfret's being of the Bedchamber; in truth he had resigned, but Lord O.[1] has not, nor Lord Bolinbroke: two names that were not formerly worn by lunatics. I proposed last year, but it was too reasonable and too cheap a plan to be adopted, that the few who remain in their senses should be shut up in Bedlam, and all the rest be at liberty. Perhaps it was not accepted because the majority do not like liberty. Accordingly they are now humoured and sent to the Tower, instead of to Moorfields. Adieu!

2119. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 30, 1780.

I am sorry, my dear Sir, that you should be so humble with me your ancient friend, and to whom you have ever been so liberal, as to make an apology for desiring me to grant the request of another person. I am not less sorry that I shall not, I fear, be able to comply with it; and you must have the patience to hear my reasons. The first edition of the *Anecdotes* was of three hundred, of the two first volumes; and of as many of the third volume, and of the volume of *Engravers*. Then there was an edition of three hundred of all four. Unluckily I did not keep any number back of the two first volumes, and literally have none but those I reserved for myself. Of the other two

[1] The Earl of Orford.

I have two or three; and, I believe, I have a first, but without the cuts. If I can, with some odd volumes that I kept for corrections, make out a decent set, the library of the University shall have them; but you must not promise them, lest I should not be able to perform.

Of my new fourth volume I printed six hundred; but as they *can* be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This is a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them—and so they would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales, and but a few. As my *Anecdotes of Painting* have been published at such distant periods, and in three divisions, complete sets will be seldom seen—so, if I am humbled as an author, I may be vain as a printer—and, when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that.

I will now trust you with a secret, but beg Mr. Gough may not know it, for he will print it directly. Though I forgot Alma Mater, I have not forgotten my Almae Nutrices, wet or dry, I mean Eton and King's. I have laid aside for them, and left them in my will, as complete a set as I could, of all I have printed. A few I did give them at first—but I have for neither a perfect set of the *Anecdotes*, I mean, not the two first volumes. I should be much obliged to you, if, without naming me, you could inform yourself if I did send to King's those two first volumes; I believe not.

I will now explain what I said above of Mr. Gough. He has learnt, I suppose, from my engravers, that I have had some views of Strawberry Hill engraved—slap-dash, down it went, and he has even specified each view in his second volume. This curiosity is a little impertinent—but he has made me some amends by a new blunder, for he says they are engraved for a second edition of my Catalogue. Now I have certainly printed but one edition, for which the

prints are designed. He says truly, that I printed but a few for use—consequently, I by no means wished the whole world should know it—but he is very silly—and so I will say no more of him.

Dr. Lort called on me yesterday, and asked if I had any message to you; but I had written too lately.

Mr. Pennant has been, as I think I told you, in town—by this time I conclude he is, as Lady Townley says of fifty pounds, all over the kingdom.

When Dr. Lort returns, I shall be very glad to read your transcript of Wolsey's letters; *for*, in your hand, I *can* read them. I will not have them but by some very safe conveyance, and will return them with equal care.

I can have no objection to Robin Masters being woodenhead of the Antiquarian Society—but, I suppose, he is not dignified enough for them. I should prefer the Judge[1] too, because a coif makes him more like an old woman, and I reckon that Society the midwives of superannuated miscarriages.

I am grieved for the return of your headaches—I doubt you write too much.

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

P.S. It will be civil to tell Dr. Farmer[2] that I do not know whether I can obey his commands; but that I will if I can. As to a distinguished place, I beg not to be preferred to much better authors—nay, the more conspicuous, the more likely to be stolen for the reasons I have given you, of there being few complete sets—and true collectors are mighty apt to steal.

Letter 2119.—[1] Hon. Daines Barrington; see letter to Cole of Nov. 24, 1780.

[2] Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Librarian of that University.

2120. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 5, 1780.

I have the best of all excuses, Madam, and that which a saint might make, for not having mentioned the pictures of Hogarth at Bristol[1], of which Lord Shelburne is so good as to inform me. I should have specified if I had known of them, because, being in a church, they are considerable enough: otherwise, I confined myself to his pictures that were not portraits, the latter being too numerous; and to the prints from his works for the use of collectors. I am much flattered by Lord Shelburne's approbation, though I am sorry he gives himself time to read such idle books; and I am obliged by your Ladyship's haste to acquaint me with my omission; though, I assure you, I shall not be pressed to repair it, as it will be long, I believe, before there is occasion for a new edition. I printed six hundred to supply the purchasers of the two editions of the former volumes. Not above a quarter are sold yet, and I have no right to settle in my bookseller's shop; one should only pass through it, or not go thither. I remember a story of poor Dr. Chapman[2], one of Dr. Middleton's antagonists, but I have so entirely forgotten his works that I shall tell it very lamely. He went to his bookseller, and asked how his last work had sold? 'Very indifferently, indeed, Sir.' 'Ay! why how many are gone off?' 'Only five, Sir!' 'Alack! and how many of my *Eusebius* (I think it was) have you left?' 'Two hundred, Sir!' 'Indeed! well, but my book on (I don't know what), how many have you of them?' 'Oh, the whole impression, Sir!' 'Good now!

Letter 2120.—[1] 'The Sealing of the Sepulchre,' 'The Ascension,' and 'The Three Maries,' executed in 1756 as an altar-piece for St. Mary Redcliffe.

[2] Thomas Chapman, D.D. (d. 1760), Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge.

good now! that is much!' 'Well! Mr. ——, I cannot help it; I do my duty, and satisfy my conscience.'

I will write on; not being so conscientious as Dr. Chapman, I shall accept or take my quietus; but as we are only among ourselves, I will tell your Ladyship another old story apropos to Lord Shelburne's reading idle books.

After Sir Paul Methuen had quitted court, the late Queen[3], who thought she had that foolish talent of playing off people, frequently saw him when she dined abroad during the King's absences at Hanover. Once that she dined with my mother at Chelsea, Sir Paul was there as usual. People that play off others generally harp on the same string. The Queen's constant topic for teasing Sir Paul was his passion for romances, and he was weary of it, and not in good humour with her. 'Well, Sir Paul, what romance are you reading now?' 'None, Madam! I have gone through them all.' 'Well! what are you reading then?' 'I am got into a very foolish study, Madam; the history of the Kings and Queens of England.' Perhaps Lord Shelburne thinks romances as wise a study.

I know nothing of yesterday's debate more than you will see in the papers, Madam; nor of anything else; no, not the title of Lady Craven's play, which, not being quite born, perhaps is not christened.

When you write to Lady Warwick, I wish your Ladyship would persuade her (with her Earl's leave) to bring to town a most curious book, which I once looked over in his father's time. It is a folio, by one John Thorpe, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, and contains many ground-plans and a few uprights of several goodly mansions of those days, of some of which John Thorpe was the architect. This is not mere personal curiosity: I have found in my notes that in

[3] Queen Caroline.

that book is a plan of *the old house* at Ampthill, altered by John Thorpe. I want to see whether that Ampthill is your Ampthill or Houghton. It is a pity the book is not engraved: being only lines it would not cost much, indeed many persons would be glad to subscribe for it. As Mr. Charles Greville[4] is a *savio*, I marvel he does not promote it. Did I ever tell you, Madam, that Elizabeth Duchess of Exeter, sister of our Harry IV, and her second husband, Sir J. Cornwall Lord Fanhope, lived at Ampthill, and he died there? Their portraits in painted glass were in the church, whence there is a pretty print in Sandford's *Genealogic History of the Kings of England*; but I dare to say that I have told you this before, *et que voilà de ma radoterie*, —it is a proof at least that I dote on Ampthill.

2121. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1780.

Whether you are glad or sorry, or neither, my Lady, the Empress-Queen[1] is dead, and Miss Bingham[2] is to succeed her. Oh, no, I mistake; the latter is only to be Lady Althorp at present; but I believe another Empress-Queen[3] will feel her crown totter a little by this match. It was declared at Devonshire House on Saturday after the Opera, and the Emperor—stay, I mean Admiral Darby[4]—was to beat Monsieur D'Estaing yesterday, and everybody was in such spirits on these three great events, for the Emperor is to march directly into Lorraine, and Lord Spencer is to convoy—Lord bless me, I heard so much of all those matters,

[4] Hon. Charles Francis Greville, second son of first Earl of Warwick and Brooke; d. 1809.

Letter 2121. — [1] The Empress Maria Theresa died on Nov. 29, 1780.

[2] Miss Bingham was married to Lord Althorpe in March 1781.

[3] Probably a reference to the Duchess of Devonshire, sister of Lord Althorpe, elsewhere called the 'empress of fashion.'

[4] Vice-Admiral George Darby (d. 1790), at this time in command of the Channel fleet.

that I do nothing but confound them, and don't know one from t'other, so I will say no more on them.

I saw Madame la Baronne[5] last night at Madame de Welderen's, ay, and the Baron, too; he is well enough, and she looked very well.

I know nothing else upon earth or water, but I have sent your Ladyship enough to spread upon many slices of conversation, and that is the great use of letters in the country.

2122. To Lord Hailes.

Dec. 11, 1780.

I should have been shamefully ungrateful, Sir, if I could ever forget all the favours I have received from you, and had omitted any mark of respect to you that it was in my power to show. Indeed, what you are so good as to thank me for was a poor trifle[1], but it was all I had or shall have of the kind. It was imperfect too, as some painters of name have died since it was printed, which was nine years ago. They will be added with your kind notices, should I live, which is not probable, to see a new edition wanted. Sixty-three years, and a great deal of illness, are too speaking mementos not to be attended to; and when the public has been more indulgent than one had any right to expect, it is not decent to load it with one's dotage!

I believe, Sir, that I may have been over-candid to Hogarth, and that his spirit and youth and talent may have hurried him into more real caricatures than I specified; yet he certainly restrained his bent that way pretty early. Charteris[2] I have seen; but though some years older than you, Sir, I cannot say I have at all a perfect idea of him:

[5] Baroness von Kutzleben.

Letter 2122.—[1] The fourth volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*.

[2] The notorious Colonel Francis Charteris (1675–1732), who figures in the first plate of Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress.'

nor did I ever hear the curious anecdote you tell me of the banker and my father. I was much better acquainted with Archbishop Blackburne[3]. He lived within two doors of my father in Downing Street, and took much notice of me when I was near man. It is not to be ungrateful and asperse him, but to amuse you, if I give you some account of him from what I remember. He was perfectly a fine gentleman to the last, to eighty-four; his favourite author was Waller, whom he frequently quoted. In point of decorum, he was not quite so exact as you have been told, Sir. I often dined with him,—his mistress (Mrs. Cruwys) sat at the head of the table, and Hayter, his natural son by another woman, and very like him, at the bottom, as chaplain: he was afterwards Bishop of London. I have heard, but do not affirm it, that Mrs. Blackburne, before she died, complained of Mrs. Cruwys being brought under the same roof. To his clergy he was, I have heard, very imperious. One story I recollect, which showed how much he was a man of this world! and which the Queen herself repeated to my father. On the King's last journey to Hanover, before Lady Yarmouth came over[4], the Archbishop being with her Majesty, said to her, 'Madam, I have been with your minister Walpole, and he tells me that you are a wise woman, and do not mind your husband's having a mistress.' He was a little hurt at not being raised to Canterbury on Wake's death[5], and said to my father, 'You did not think on me; but it is true, I am too old, I am too old.' Perhaps, Sir, these are gossiping stories, but at least they hurt nobody now.

I can say little, Sir, for my stupidity or forgetfulness about Hogarth's poetry, which I still am not sure I ever heard, though I knew him so well; but it is an additional

[3] Lancelot Blackburne, Archbishop of York; d. 1743.
[4] In 1735. [5] In 1737.

argument for my distrusting myself, if my memory fails, which is very possible. A whole volume of Richardson's [6] poetry has been published since my volume was printed, not much to the honour of his muse, but exceedingly so to that of his piety and amiable heart. You will be pleased, too, Sir, with a story Lord Chesterfield told me (too late too) of Jervas, who piqued himself on the reverse, on total infidelity. One day that he had talked very indecently in that strain, Dr. Arbuthnot, who was as devout as Richardson, said to him, 'Come, Jervas, this is all an air and affectation; nobody is a sounder believer than you.' 'I!' said Jervas, 'I believe nothing.' 'Yes, but you do,' replied the Doctor; 'nay, you not only believe, but practise: you are so scrupulous an observer of the commandments, that you never make the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or,' &c.

I fear, Sir, this letter is too long for thanks, and that I have been proving what I have said, of my growing superannuated; but, having made my will in my last volume, you may look on this as a codicil.

P.S. I had sealed my letter, Sir, but break it open, lest you should think soon, that I do not know what I say, or break my resolution lightly. I shall be able to send you in about two months a very curious work that I am going to print, and is actually in the press; but there is not a syllable of my writing in it. It is a discovery just made of two very ancient manuscripts, copies of which were found in two or three libraries in Germany, and of which there are more complete manuscripts at Cambridge. They are of the eleventh century at lowest, and prove that painting in oil was then known, above three hundred years before the

[6] Jonathan Richardson, the painter; his *Morning Thoughts*, with notes by his son, appeared in 1776.

pretended invention of Van Eyck. The manuscripts themselves will be printed, with a full introductory dissertation by the discoverer, Mr. Raspe, a very learned German, formerly librarian to the Landgrave of Hesse, and who writes English surprisingly well. The manuscripts are in the most barbarous monkish Latin, and are much such works as our booksellers publish of receipts for mixing colours, varnishes, &c. One of the authors, who calls himself Theophilus, was a monk; the other, Heraclius, is totally unknown; but the proofs are unquestionable. As my press is out of order, and that besides it would take up too much time to print them there, they will be printed here at my expense, and if there is any surplus, it will be for Raspe's benefit.

2123. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 12, 1780.

Your Florence, no doubt, is much occupied by the death of the Empress-Queen. It turns all eyes on the Emperor, and sets thousands of tongues to work, the owners of every one of which will expect to pass for a prophet, if Cæsar within these two years takes one step which is at all like twenty, any one of which it is probable he may take. I was with you just forty years ago, when the departed Empress came to the crown. What a tide of events that era occasioned! You and I shall not see much of what this may produce, and therefore I will not guess at a history that is in its cradle for me, and that I shall not be acquainted with when it is come to years of discretion. I wish our own wars were come to that pass.

The new Parliament, which is now gone to keep its Christmas, has been but little ruffled;—nay, as if there were no new matter, they are to tap again, after the

holidays, the whole story of Keppel and Palliser. Indeed, at this instant, the town expect news of an engagement between Darby and D'Estaing; though I think there are more reasons for not thinking it probable: however, I have still less skill in naval matters than even in others. . . .[1]

Our old acquaintance, Lord Pomfret, has taken his chastisement very patiently, which looks less mad than he was thought.

This is the sum of my present knowledge: and thus a most turbulent year has the appearance of concluding drowsily enough; and, for fleets and armies, their exploits on both sides would lie in a nutshell. An historian may be sorry, but a man of feeling must rejoice that such scourges as armaments may do such little mischief to the human race. Fame cannot be acquired but by the groans of hospitals full of sufferers! The last act of the Empress-Queen, the stemming the torrent of blood between her son and the King of Prussia, is in my eyes the brightest in her annals.

2124. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Sunday, Dec. 17, 1780.

No, Madam, I have been much out of order, as the outworks have for some time been in ruins; I thought the citadel itself was at last, to use an old word, beleaguered. In short, for some days I had a pain in my stomach, and never having had it there, nor knowing how it feels there, I concluded it was the gout. But it took another turn, and became a disorder that has been fashionable, and was almost gone out of fashion; just the time when the ancient generally adopt modes. I am pretty well again, but look ruefully, as you may believe, for I can afford to part with very little

Letter 2123.—[1] Passage scored through and illegible.

of my *embonpoint*. You ask if I shall pass my Christmas in town; I know and feel it is a kind question; but I must answer, alas! yes. I am grown an Astracan lamb, and vegetate in one spot. George Selwyn says he told your Ladyship that I am out of spirits. I did not know it particularly, nor have any cause; but I am sensible they often flag; and one reason for my reluctance to go anywhere is, that if I am not perfectly quiet all the morning, I am exhausted before night. This, with twenty other decays of which I am sensible, makes me shun what I am not fit for.

I will return Lord S.'s letter when I have the honour of seeing your Ladyship. I do not know whether he judges rightly of certain persons just at present. It has been their mood, and may be so still; and I know *one* that having tried others and been rejected, is willing—nay, desirous, of trying with those Lord S. means, what he tried last year; but I should wonder if they were accepted now, unless to expose them, which is not worth while. Nobody blots flimsy blotting-paper out of spite.

My old acquaintance, or rather my acquaintance, old Lady Shelburne[1], I see by the papers, is dead. How has she left her fortune, once so great, but which, with superabundant cunning, she had rendered almost as crazy as she was latterly?

Your aunt[2] was charming about Madame la Baronne, till *almost* the last minute, and told me they would have very little. But indeed, when people were in love with one another! However, I suppose, to accustom them to economy, she did not give the Baron a dinner even on the wedding-day, and he begged one of the parson that was to

Letter 2124.—[1] Mary Fitzgerald, Dowager Countess of Shelburne.

[2] The Duchess of Bedford; she was also aunt of Baroness von Kutzleben.

marry them. The kitchen was as cold the next day, and the turtles pecked on the same parson's board.

Mr. Morrice has been in England above these two months. I have not seen him, for he has been laid up with the gout at Chiswick from within a week of his arrival, when, I hear, he looked as ill as when he went abroad. I thought Lord John much broken before he went out of town.

The Crapaudines begin to discover amazing charms in Miss Bingham. One of them, as Lord Althorp was talking to her, went up to him, and holding up her fan that Miss might not *see* what she said, told him, 'She is a sweet creature!' Another of them repeated this; and yet I would not swear was not the very person that said it; for, if a court is no bigger than an egg-shell, it is equally full of jealousy and treachery. I wish the inhabitants of any court would write comedies—if they could speak truth. They would need but to write down what they have seen and heard—and there would be character with a witness! Lord Hervey did leave a dialogue of one whole day in the late King's reign—that is, of what commonly passed there[3]. It was not, I believe, exactly what I mean, but rather a ridicule on the individuals of the *dramatis personae*; I never saw it, but Lady Hervey told me it was the best thing he ever wrote: however, those would be transient ridicules. I would only have general nature, when it has been refined and strained through the thousand sieves of self-love, ambition, envy, malice, mischief, design, treachery, falsehood, and professions, glazed over with perfect ease, good breeding, and good humour, and the passions only evaporating through invisible pores, but the angles of the atoms as sharp as needles, and mortal as diamond dust. But how could one describe smiles that assent away another's favour, or

[3] Lord Hervey's 'drama,' *A Morning at Court.* (See Hervey's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, ed. 1884, vol. ii. p. 333.)

a bow purposely omitted, and then recollected as designedly to tell a person he is in disgrace before he knew it himself? Could a pit or gallery comprehend the importance assumed by a bedchamber-woman or a page of the back stairs, in denying some arrant trifle that was a secret in the morning, and is to be in the *Gazette* at night?

I caught Lady S.[4] t'other night in one of these mysteries; it was two nights before Lord Althorp's match was owned; but I had supped at Lord Lucan's with the whole court of Spencer, and Lord A. had sat at a side-table with the two girls, Miss Molesworth[5] and old Miss Shipley. I knew if I asked directly, I should be answered, 'Upon my word *I* know nothing of the matter'; so, after supper, sitting by Lady S. on a settee, I said, 'Pray, Lady S., is it owned that Lord A. is to marry—Miss Shipley?' She burst out a-laughing, and could not recompose her face again.

I fear, by your Ladyship's account, that Miss Vernon ought to go abroad; and, if she ought, surely no time should be lost. Old Dr. Monro told my father that he scarce knew anything that asses' milk and change of air would not cure, and that it was better to go into a bad air than not to change it often.

My being confined and idle has made me scribble a volume about nothing. I hope you will be as *désœuvrée* when you are to read it.

Just as I had finished my letter, I learnt the dreadful calamity that happened at the Opera House last night. Don't be alarmed, Madam; not a life is lost—yet. There *was* a fire, and it is not yet extinguished. The theatre was brimful in expectation of Vestris. At the end of the

[4] Countess Spencer.

[5] Frances (d. 1829), daughter and heiress of William Molesworth, of Wenbury, Devonshire; m. (1785) Hon. John Jeffreys Pratt (afterwards styled Viscount Bayham), eldest son of first Baron Camden (created Earl Camden in 1786), whom he succeeded in 1794. Miss Molesworth was a niece of Lady Lucan, and in consequence a first cousin of Miss Bingham.

second act he appeared; but with so much grace, agility, and strength, that the whole audience fell into convulsions of applause: the men thundered; the ladies, forgetting their delicacy and weakness, clapped with such vehemence, that seventeen broke their arms, sixty-nine sprained their wrists, and three cried bravo! bravissimo! so rashly, that they have not been able to utter so much as *no* since, any more than both Houses of Parliament. I do not love to exaggerate, but the shouts were so loud that they reached Great Russell Street and terrified Lord Mansfield, who thought the mob was coming again, and fled to Caen Wood; but, though the true cause was soon discovered, there is to be a camp in the Mews every Opera night, and nobody suffered to appear there, but gagged and handcuffed, for really if people are at liberty to applaud what they approve, there is an end of all government!

As folks in the country love to hear of *London fashions*, know, Madam, that the reigning one amongst the *quality* is to go after the Opera to the lottery offices, where their Ladyships bet with the keepers. You choose any number you please; if it does not come up next day, you pay five guineas; if it does, receive forty, or in proportion to the age of the *tirage*. The Duchess of Devonshire in one day won nine hundred pounds. General Smith, as the luckiest of all mites, is of the most select parties, and chooses the numeros.

2125. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 19, 1780.

I cannot leave you for a moment in an error, my good Sir, when you transfer a compliment to me, to which I have not the most slender claim; and defraud another of it, to whom it is due. The friend of Mr. Gray, in whom authorship caused no jealousy or variance, as Mr. Main-

waring[1] says truly, is Mr. Mason. *I* certainly never excelled in poetry, and never attempted the species of poetry alluded to, odes.

Dr. L.[2], I suppose, is removing to a living or a prebend—at least I hope so. He may run a risk if he carries his books to Lambeth. *Sono sonate venti tre ore e mezza,* as Alexander VIII said to his nephew, when he was chosen Pope in extreme old age. My Lord of Canterbury's is not extreme, but very tottering[3].

I found in Mr. Gough's new edition, that in the Pepysian library is a view of the theatre in Dorset Gardens[4], and views of four or five other ancient great mansions. Do the folk of Magdalen ever suffer copies of such things to be taken? and if they would, is there anybody at Cambridge who could execute them, and reasonably? Answer me quite at your leisure; and, also, what and by whom the altar-piece is, that Lord Carlisle has given to King's. I did not know he had been of our college.

I have two or three plates of Strawberry more than those you mention, but my collections are so numerous, and from various causes my prints have been in such confusion, that at present I neither know where the plates or proofs are. I intend next summer to set about completing my plan of the Catalogue and its prints; and, when I have found any of the plates or proofs, you shall certainly have those you want. There are the two large views of the house, one of the cottage, one of the library, one of the front to the road, and the chimney-piece in the Holbein room. I think these

Letter 2125.—[1] Rev. John Mainwaring, of St. John's College, Cambridge. He alluded to Gray in his *Sermons on Several Occasions*, published in 1780.

[2] Dr. Lort.

[3] Archbishop Cornwallis was sixty-seven; he lived till 1783.

[4] Dorset Gardens Theatre 'stood fronting the river on the east or City side of Salisbury Court, with an open place before it for the reception of coaches, and public stairs to the Thames for the convenience of those who came by water.' (Wheatley and Cunningham, *London Past and Present*, vol. i. p. 513.) It was opened in 1671, and pulled down about 1720.

are all that are finished—oh, yes, I believe the Prior's garden; but I have not see them these two years. I was so ill the summer before last, that I attended to nothing; the little I thought of in that way last summer, was to get out my last volume of the *Anecdotes*—now I have nothing to trouble myself about as an editor, and that not publicly, but to finish my Catalogue—and that will be awkwardly enough, for so many articles have been added to my collection since the description was made, that I must add them in the appendix, or reprint it—and, what is more inconvenient, the positions of many of the pictures have been changed; and so it will be a lame piece of work. Adieu, my dear Sir!

Yours most cordially,
H. W.

2126. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1780.

I am sorry that my letters of late years contain so many eras; this dates a new one, of an additional war with Holland. The manifesto of our court appeared in the *Gazette Extraordinary* this morning. I am no prophesying politician, you know; and if I were, as I am too old to be a sanguine one, I should not disperse my Sibylline leaves about Europe.

Another fact, that must speak for itself, is, that Admiral Darby has brought his fleet home, as D'Estaing has led the French and Spanish squadrons and the trade to Brest. Pray desire the Emperor to leave Ostend open, or I shall not be able to write to you at all. It is not very pleasant at present; for, with so many intervening enemies and interlopers, one can converse with no more frankness than in a congress of ambassadors. I write as much as I can for your satisfaction, but no continental post office will ever

learn from me a tittle they did not know before. *You* may suffer by it, but I am sure approve me. Do not imagine there is either *tædium* or air in this. I do know nothing before it has happened: it is merely my own comment that I suppress, as I love my country too well to treat foreigners with anything I am sorry for.

Having thus said my say, I have nothing of the least consequence to add. The town is, and will be, empty till the Parliament meets; and then people will return, because it is the fashion, and stay till it is the fashion to go to Newmarket: for, in countries that are or have been great, the chief philosophers are such as have no philosophy, and who consign over to the inferior classes the sense of public calamities. In fact, the world is grown more intrepid than in ancient days. Our progenitors braved enemies; we moderns defy elements, and do not, like the effeminate Greeks and Romans, go into winter-quarters at the beck of the almanack; and thence winds, waves, and climates gain the most considerable victories.

There has been an hurricane at St. Kitt's, that, according to the etiquette of destruction, deserves a triumphal arch—perhaps *opima spolia*, for nothing has yet been heard of Admiral Rowley[1]! Oh, but I cannot sport, when humanity aches in every nerve! and when the seals of a new book are opened, like those in the Revelations! I detest war, nor can perceive that anybody has cause to exult in it. Adieu!

LETTER 2126.—[1] The hurricane took place in October 1780. Admiral Rowley was then acting as convoy to the Jamaica trade on its way to Europe. He returned to Jamaica with five other ships, all of which were disabled. Of the rest, the *Berwick* reached England, the *Stirling Castle* and *Phœnix* were wrecked, and the *Thunderer* was never heard of again.

2127. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Christmas Day, 1780.

Though you order me to give you an account of myself, Madam, I shall not obey, for I cannot give you a good one; and one is so apt to talk of oneself, and by the courtesy of self-love to think every trifle of importance, that I will boldly be out of order if I please, without being responsible to any one; no, not even to a friend.

We have so many enemies, and subdue them so rapidly, that I did not think it was worth while to notify to your Ladyship the new war with Holland. Lord Cornwallis, I suppose, will step over and dispatch it in a parenthesis of six weeks, and still be as likely as ever to conquer America. Who is to burn Amsterdam I have not yet heard.

Lord Warwick has already sent me John Thorpe's book, Madam, and a most obliging letter. *The* Ampthill is not Houghton-Ampthill, but the individual palace that stood in your paddock where the cross is, and in which Queen Catherine *lay*, as royal folk did then, though now they and everybody else only *sleep*; and a spacious and goodly mansion it was. There is not the elevation, nor of Kirby Hatton, built by the dancing Chancellor in 1570; but there is the ground-plan. I remember wanting to make the last Chancellor, Bathurst, dance at one of Mons. de Guines' balls. He came thither very drunk, and, as somebody wished to see the Scotch *reel*, I proposed that my Lord Chancellor should dance it.

I am uncommonly glad, Madam, that Mr. Coxe[1] is

Letter 2127. — [1] Rev. William Coxe (1747–1828), historian, and biographer of Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards Archdeacon of Wiltshire. He had already travelled with various young men of family and fortune. He published *Sketches of the Natural, Political, and Civil State of Swisserland* in 1779, and an *Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America* in 1780.

destined for Mentor to your Telemachus. His *Travels* are by far the most sensible of all those late publications, and his principles of the old rock.

Your heroine at Bath, Madam, is from the same quarry in another light, and the counterpart to Cato himself, who accommodated a friend with his own wife, for the sake of virtue, and took her again with as much decorum as possible. Pray read the description in Lucan, or, if you affect not understanding Latin, in Rowe; you will see with what staid gravity those matters were transacted, when good Patriots desponded about the Commonwealth. I have not a Lucan in town, or would refer you to the spot.

My nieces are indubitably not going abroad, nor do the Duke and Duchess think of it. They will be in town at the end of next month.

Lord Macartney, I hear, is to sail[2] before that time; Lady Macartney does not go with him. I remember what a quarto my last letter was, and restrain this within bounds.

P.S. I shall not attempt to see Vestris till the weather is milder, though it is the universal voice that he is the only perfect being that has dropped from the clouds within the memory of man or woman; but then, indeed, nobody allows memory much retrospect, lest they should seem old themselves. When the Parliament meets, he is to be thanked by the Speaker.

2128. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Dec. 29, 1780.

I am ashamed and sick, dear Sir, of the chicaneries I meet with about my poor friend's papers, though I never expect

[2] For Madras, of which he had been appointed Governor.

Letter 2128.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 41–5.

to get any worth a straw. Since I wrote to you last, I received a mighty zealous letter from the Pr[1]., vaunting on his having insisted on having for me the MSS. books, which the executor would have withheld. I took that opportunity of writing to him a mighty grateful letter, which I showed to your son, in hopes of peaking his generosity. *À la bonne heure!* He now, *he* who was so afraid of the characters being printed, desires me to print such as he shall mark to me, to save him the trouble of having them copied! In that letter too he proposed to me to give the correspondence with Voltaire to be printed with the latter's works; adding that, as far as he had gone, he found they would do her honour. To that I consented. Now again, in the letter you enclosed from him, he says he finds very few of Voltaire's original letters! All this is so shuffling, that to save myself and you, dear Sir, any further trouble, I will add a note which you will be so good as to translate to him, that I hope will prevent any more messages backwards and forwards.

I forgot another trait. He says, that amongst what is left to me are many *brochures*, chiefly things of Voltaire, that are or will be in the new edition, and which he supposes I should not desire to have. I certainly did desire nothing; but, being thus treated, I cannot be such a fool as to acquiesce blindly, and if I am wronged, it shall not be with my own consent. I will, therefore, beg you very civilly, dear Sir, to make my compliments to the Pr., and tell him that, as he is not well, I do not write myself, not to put him to the trouble of answering it. That, as to printing any of the portraits or characters, I am sure that upon reflection he will not wish it: for, as it is impossible for me to secure that my printer would not reserve a copy or copies for himself, it must risk what the

[1] The Prince de Beauvau.

Pr. himself apprehended, their being published; and that nothing could induce me to run a hazard of that kind. That, if the Pr. will mark those of which he desires copies, I can have them transcribed in my own room without any danger. That, as to the letters of Voltaire, my dear friend had his and her own letters all transcribed into a folio, which may have occasioned the neglect of the originals; but such a book there was, and ought to be. That, as to the *brochures*, they will be very valuable to me, as I may not be able to get them in England, and in France they must be common, and therefore I should wish to have them.

This, dear Sir, is with the reserve of their not being too bulky to trouble you with, but I had rather you should leave behind you what you do not think worth bringing, than comply with a request that I do not at all admire. I am very sorry you have so much trouble; but I flatter myself you approve me, and do not think that I have insisted on too much: perhaps I have on too little. I received the snuff-box, and it is most precious to me. I own I wish to have the dog itself, that I may make it as happy as my poor friend did. She is, if possible, more dear to me by comparing her with others.

I do not pretend to send you news as your son is here.

If you see the Duchess de Choiseul, or the Abbé Barthélemi, I will beg you to let them know that I had ordered their letters to be restored *before* they asked for them.

I have barely time to read my letter, and am, dear Sir, infinitely ashamed of and grateful for the trouble you have for

Yours most affectionately,

H. W.

2129. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 31, 1780.

I have received, and thank you much for the curious history[1] of the Count and Countess of Albany; what a wretched conclusion of a wretched family! Surely no royal race was ever so drawn to the dregs! The other Countess[2] you mention seems to approach still nearer to dissolution. Her death a year or two ago might have prevented the sale of the pictures,—not that I know it would. Who can say what madness in the hands of villainy would or would not have done? Now, I think, her dying would only put more into the reach of rascals. But I am indifferent what they do; nor, but thus occasionally, shall I throw away a thought on that chapter.

All chance of accommodation with Holland is vanished. Count Welderen[3] and his wife departed this morning. All they who are to gain by privateers and captures are delighted with a new field of plunder. Piracy is more practicable than victory. Not being an admirer of wars, I shall reserve my *feux de joie* for peace.

My letters, I think, are rather eras than journals. Three days ago commenced another date—the establishment of a family for the Prince of Wales. I do not know all the names, and fewer of the faces that compose it; nor intend. I, who kissed the hand of George I, have no colt's tooth for the court of George IV. Nothing is so ridiculous as an antique face in a juvenile Drawing-room. I believe that they who have spirits enough to be absurd in their decrepi-

Letter 2129.—[1] The Pretender's wife complaining to the Great Duke of her husband's beastly behaviour to her, that Prince contrived her escape into a convent, and thence sent her to Rome, where she was protected by the Cardinal of York, her husband's brother. *Walpole.*

[2] The Countess of Orford. *Walpole.*

[3] The Dutch minister.

tude, are happy, for they certainly are not sensible of their folly; but I, who have never forgotten what I thought in my youth of such superannuated idiots, dread nothing more than misplacing myself in my old age. In truth, I feel no such appetite; and, excepting the young of my own family, about whom I am interested, I have mighty small satisfaction in the company of *posterity*; for so the present generation seem to me. I would contribute anything to their pleasure, but what cannot contribute to it—my own presence. Alas! how many of this age are swept away before me: six thousand have been mowed down at once by the late hurricane at Barbadoes alone! How Europe is paying the debts it owes to America! Were I a poet, I would paint hosts of Mexicans and Peruvians crowding the shores of Styx, and insulting the multitudes of the usurpers of their continent that have been sending themselves thither for these five or six years. The poor Africans, too, have no call to be merciful to European ghosts. Those miserable slaves have just now seen whole crews of men-of-war swallowed by the late hurricane.

We do not yet know the extent of our loss. You would think it very slight, if you saw how little impression it makes on a luxurious capital. An overgrown metropolis has less sensibility than marble; nor can it be conceived by those not conversant in one. I remember hearing what diverted me then; a young gentlewoman, a native of our rock, St. Helena, and who had never stirred beyond it, being struck with the emotion occasioned there by the arrival of one or two of our China ships, said to the captain, 'There must be a great solitude in London as often as the China ships come away!' Her imagination could not have compassed the idea, if she had been told that six years of war, the absence of an army of fifty or sixty thousand men and of all our squadrons, and a new debt of many, many

millions, would not make an alteration in the receipt at the door of a single theatre in London. I do not boast of, or applaud, this profligate apathy. When pleasure is our business, our business is never our pleasure; and, if four wars cannot awaken us, we shall die in a dream!

2130. To Lord Hailes.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 1, 1781.

Your favourable opinion of my father, Sir, is too flattering to me not to thank you for the satisfaction it gave me. Wit, I think, he had not naturally, though I am sure he had none from affectation, as simplicity was a predominant feature in his amiable composition; but he possessed that, perhaps, most true species of wit, which flows from experience and deep knowledge of mankind, and consequently had more in his later than in his earlier years; which is not common to a talent that generally flashes from spirits, though they alone cannot bestow it. When you was once before so good, Sir, as to suggest to me an attempt at writing my father's life, I probably made you one answer that I must repeat now, which is, that a son's encomiums would be attributed to partiality; and, with my deep devotion to his memory, I should ever suspect it in myself.

But I will set my repugnance in a stronger light, by relating an anecdote not incurious. In the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, Dr. Kippis, the tinker of it, reflecting on my having called the former 'Vindicatio Britannica, or a Defence of Everybody,' *threatened* that when he should come to my father's life he would convince me that the new edition did not deserve that censure. I confess I thought this but an odd sort of historian equity, to reverse Scripture and punish the sins of children upon their fathers! However, I said nothing. Soon after

Dr. Kippis himself called on me, and in very gracious terms desired I would favour him with anecdotes of my father's life. This was descending a little from his censorial throne, but I took no notice; and only told him, that I was so persuaded of the fairness of my father's character, that I choose to trust it to the most unprejudiced hands; and that all I could consent to was, that when he shall have written it, if he would communicate it to me, I would point out to him any material facts, if I should find any, that were not truly noted. This was all I could contribute.

Since that time I have seen in the second volume a very gross accusation of Sir Robert, at second or third hand, and to which the smallest attention must give a negative. Sir Robert is accused of having, out of spite, influenced the House of Commons to expel the late Lord Barrington for the notorious job of the Harburg lottery. Spite was not the ingredient most domineering in my father's character; but whatever has been said of the corruption or servility of Houses of Commons, when was there one so prostitute, that it would have expelled one of their own members for a fraud *not proved*, to gratify the vengeance of the minister? and a minister must have been implacable indeed, and a House of Commons profligate indeed, to inflict such a stigma on an innocent man, because he had been attached to a rival predecessor of the minister. It is not less strange that the Harburgher's son should not have vindicated his parent's memory at the opportunity of the Secret Committee on Sir Robert, but should wait for a manuscript memorandum of Serjeant Skinner[1] after the death of this last. I hope Sir Robert will have no such apologist!

I do not agree less with you, Sir, in your high opinion of King William. I think, and a far better judge, Sir Robert,

Letter 2130.—[1] The Secret Committee sat in 1742, and Matthew Skinner died in 1749.

thought that Prince one of the wisest men that ever lived. Your *bon mot* of his was quite new to me. There are two or three passages in the diary of the second Earl of Clarendon that always struck me as instances of wisdom and humour at once; particularly his Majesty's reply to the Lords who advised him (I think at Salisbury) to send away King James; and his few words, after long patience, to that foolish Lord himself, who harangued him on the observance of his declaration. Such traits, and several of Queen Anne (not equally deep) in the same journal, paint those Princes as characteristically as Lord Clarendon's able father would have drawn them. There are two letters in the *Nugae Antiquae*[2] that exhibit as faithful pictures of Queen Elizabeth and James the First, by delineating them in their private life and unguarded hours.

You are much in the right, Sir, in laughing at those wise personages, who not only dug up the corpse of Edward the First, but *restored* Christian burial to his crown and robes. Methinks, had they deposited those regalia in the treasury of the church, they would have committed no sacrilege. I confess I have not quite so heinous an idea of sacrilege as Dr. Johnson. Of all kinds of robbery, that appears to me the lightest species which injures nobody. Dr. Johnson is so pious, that in his journey to your country, he flatters himself that all his readers will join him in enjoying the destruction of two Dutch crews, who were swallowed up by the ocean after they had robbed a church. I doubt that uncharitable anathema is more in the spirit of the Old Testament than of the New.

[2] Three of Sir John Harington's letters in the *Nugae Antiquae* relative to Queen Elizabeth might answer Horace Walpole's description; see his letter to Sir Hugh Portman of Oct. 9, 1601; that to Lady Harington of Dec. 27, 1602; and that to Robert Markham of 1606. As regards King James, Walpole evidently refers to Harington's letter to Sir Amyas Pawlett, written in 1604.

2131. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 2, 1781.

Mercy on the poor men that are to be in love with Lady Anne when she comes to maturity of tyranny! If she begins already with enjoining such tasks to her slaves, what will she do in the full career of her power? The Sphinx was a harmless dicky-bird in comparison. To send one four Quipos[1], and only a hint at an alphabet, and bid one construe four Peruvian verses, without one's having ever learnt a syllable of the language, is despotism unparalleled. She might as well have ordered me to read an Egyptian obelisk, and tell her what was meant by animals so ill drawn that they are like nothing in the creation. My penance is ten times worse; I am to find out rhymes in colours, and thoughts in knots, and cadence in a jangle of orts and ends! I am a Sibyl if I believe that any being but a lady's chambermaid can understand the sense of minced ribbons, or discover sentiments in a salmagundi of black and blue, and red and purple, and white. A piece of a tippet may be very good poetry in Lima for aught I know; and such a genius as Dryden would soon have written a whole birthday gown from as small a sample as Lady Anne has sent me; but for my part I cannot unsew a single stitch of such millinery versification; and though I will not contemptuously return such silken lines directly, I despair of unravelling them, and will only retain them till I have *effilé'd* them for a whole morning, since it seems that a mistake in a single shade may occasion a blunder or perhaps a *double entendre*.

Your Ladyship's New Year's wishes are infinitely kind,

Letter 2131.—[1] Or 'Quipus'—a system of keeping records by means of knots, used by the Peruvians in the absence of an alphabet. Quipos were made familiar to eighteenth-century readers by the *Lettres péruviennes* of Madame de Graffigny, published in 1749.

though the *molti e felici* are compliments I can only accept as I would flowers strewed on my urn. I am well again; but my late disorder was, I believe, a little of the gout in my stomach; and when once the flaw begins there, where my only strength lay, it would be silly not to know how precarious the tenure is.

Never deluding myself on that chapter, you will not wonder, Madam, that I am little qualified to resolve any questions about the dawn of the next reign. I attend to what is said about the Prince's family no more than I should to a prophet, who should offer to lay before me a vision of the whole next century. Can I forget that I kissed the hand of this Prince of Wales's great-great-grandfather, the night but one before he left England for the last time? and that I was then ten years old? Antiquated dukes may hobble into and out of golden chariots, if they think their corpses look well in them—I should not like to lie in state before I am dead.

Methinks the nation itself is fond of a magnificent funeral, and chooses to call in all countries to its burial, or at least to provoke them to dispatch it. *Et tu, Brute*: even Holland is to give us a stab. The elements, too, have joined the armed neutrality. What a catastrophe that of Barbadoes[2]! yet we are all gaiety, nay, delighted with the Dutch war. We lose provinces and islands, and are comforted by barrels of pickled herrings! Then, Madam, what a brave string of Irish peers[3]! they put me in mind of the chain of galley-slaves in *Don Quixote*[4]. Like them, I dare swear, their new Lordships would one and all assure one—they are honest men!

[2] The island of Barbadoes was a principal sufferer in the terrible hurricane of Oct. 1780. Bridge Town, the capital, was practically destroyed, and some thousands of lives were lost.

[3] Five Irish baronies were conferred in Dec. 1780, and eleven Irish peers were advanced in rank.

[4] See *Don Quixote*, part i. ch. xxii.

The ancient sovereigns of this isle are come to a *non plus* too. The Countess of Albany is retired into a convent. You know they live at Florence. Last St. Andrew's Day, who is the favourite saint *there too*, the Count got so beastly drunk, that at night every filthy consequence ensued. The Countess complaining, he tore her hair, and endeavoured to strangle her. Her screams alarmed the family, and saved her. She privately acquainted the Great Duke, and by his authority and connivance she contrived to take shelter in a convent, declaring she will never return to her husband again, who has in vain reclaimed her from the Great Duke.

Having nothing better to offer as a New Year's gift, I shall add a Nuptial Ode that I made for Lady Lucan. It would be presumption to hope it, but if Lady Anne would be so good as to translate it into a wisp of party-coloured silk, and stuff a pincushion with it, I should flatter myself with my work being immortal.

I.

Hymen, O Hymenaee!
To Althorp and Bingham
Ye bards, come and sing 'em,
And all the bells ring 'em,
With ding, ding, a dong.

II.

To Althorp and Bingham,
But pray do not ding 'em
With this or that thingum,
That may call up in Bingham
A blush all day long.

III.

Your best wishes bring 'em,
Your best roses fling 'em
O'er the hammock, where Bingham
And Althorp shall swing 'em,
With ding, ding, a dong.

P.S. I am sorry to add so serious a P.S., as that poor Lady Foley[5] died this morning.

2132. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Jan. 3, 1781.

After I had written my note to you last night, I called on ——, who gave me the dismal account of Jamaica that you will see in the *Gazette*, and of the damage done to our shipping. Admiral Rowley is safe; but they are in apprehensions for Walsingham[1]. He told me, too, what is not in the *Gazette*; that of the expedition against the Spanish settlements—not a single man survives! The papers to-day, I see, speak of great danger to Gibraltar.

Your brother repeated to me his great desire that you should publish your speech[2], as he told you. I do not conceive why *he* is so eager for it, for he professes total despair about America. It looks to me as if there was a wish of throwing blame somewhere; but I profess I am too simple to dive into the objects of shades of intrigues; nor do I care about them. We shall be reduced to a miserable little island; and from a mighty empire sink into as insignificant a country as Denmark or Sardinia! When our trade and marine are gone, the latter of which we keep up by unnatural efforts, to which our debt will put a stop, we shall lose the East Indies as Portugal did; and then France will dictate to us more imperiously than ever we did to Ireland, which is in a manner already gone too.

[5] Henrietta Stanhope, fourth daughter of second Earl of Harrington, and wife of second Baron Foley.

Letter 2132.—[1] Commodore Hon. Robert Boyle-Walsingham, commander of the *Thunderer* of 74 guns. Neither he nor his ship was heard of after the great storm of Oct. 1780.

[2] Introductory of a motion 'for leave to bring in a bill for quieting the troubles that have for some time subsisted between Great Britain and America, and enabling his Majesty to send out commissioners with full power to treat with America for that purpose.' *Walpole.*—The speech was delivered on May 5, 1780.

These are mortifying reflections, to which an English mind cannot easily accommodate itself. But, alas! we have been pursuing the very conduct that France would have prescribed, and more than with all her presumption she could have dared to expect. Could she flatter herself that we would take no advantage of the dilatoriness and unwillingness of Spain to enter into the war? that we would reject the disposition of Russia to support us? and that our still more natural friend, Holland, would be driven into the league against us? All this has happened, and, like an infant, we are delighted with having set our own frock in a blaze! I sit and gaze with astonishment at our frenzy. Yet why? Are not nations as liable to intoxication as individuals? Are not predictions founded on calculation oftener rejected than the prophecies of dreamers? Do we not act precisely like Charles Fox, who thought he had discovered a new truth in figures, when he preached that wise doctrine, that nobody could want money that would pay enough for it? The consequence was, that in two years he left himself without the possibility of borrowing a shilling. I am not surprised at the spirits of a boy of parts; I am not surprised at the people: I do wonder at government, that games away its consequence. For what are we now really at war with America, France, Spain, and Holland?—Not with hopes of reconquering America; not with the smallest prospect of conquering a foot of land from France, Spain, or Holland.—No; we are at war on the defensive, to protect what is left, or more truly to stave off, for a year perhaps, a peace that must proclaim our nakedness and impotence.

I would not willingly recur to that womanish vision of 'Something may turn up in our favour.' That something must be a naval victory that will annihilate at once all the squadrons of Europe—must wipe off forty millions of new

debt—reconcile the affections of America, that for six years we have laboured to alienate; and that must recall out of the grave the armies and sailors that are perished—and that must make thirteen provinces willing to receive the law, without the necessity of keeping ten thousand men amongst them. The gigantic imagination of Lord Chatham would not entertain such a chimera. Lord ——, perhaps, would say he did, rather than not undertake; or Mr. Burke could form a metaphoric vision that would satisfy no imagination but his own; but I, who am *nullius addictus jurare in verba*, have no hopes either in our resources or in our geniuses, and look on my country already as undone! It is grievous —but I shall not have much time to lament its fall.

2133. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Jan. 4, 1781.

I return the Quipos, Madam, because if I retained them till I understand them, I fear you would never have them again. I should as soon be able to hold a dialogue with a rainbow, by the help of its grammar, a prism, for I have not yet discovered which is the first or last verse of four lines that hang like ropes of onions. Yet it is not for want of study, or want of respect for the Peruvian manner of writing. I perceive it is a very soft language, and, though at first I tangled the poem and spoiled the rhymes, yet I can conceive that a harlequin's jacket, artfully arranged by a princess of the blood of Mango Capac[1], may contain a deep tragedy, and that a tawdry trimming may be a version of Solomon's Song. Nay, I can already say my alphabet of six colours, and know that each stands indiscriminately *but* for four letters, which gives the Peruvian a great advantage

Letter 2133.—[1] Manco Capac and Atahualpa (mentioned below) were the first and last Incas of Peru.

over the Hebrew tongue, in which the total want of vowels left every word at the mercy of the reader; and, though our salvation depended upon it, we did not know precisely what any word signified, till the invention of points, that were not used till the language had been obsolete for some thousands of years. A little uncertainty, as where one has but one letter instead of four, may give rise to many beauties. Puns must be greatly assisted by that ambiguity, and the delicacies of the language may depend on an almost imperceptible variation in the shades, as the perfection of the Chinese consists in possessing but very few syllables, each of which admits ten thousand accents, and thence pronunciation is the most difficult part of their literature.

At first sight, the resemblance of blue and green by candlelight seems to be an objection to the Peruvian; but any learned mercer might obviate that, by opposing indigo to grass-green, and ultra-marine to *verd de pomme*. The more expert one were at *nuances*, the more poetic one should be, or the more eloquent. A vermilion *A* must denote a weaker accent, or even passion, than one of carmine and crimson; and a straw-colour *U* be much more tender than one approaching to orange.

I have heard of a French perfumer who wrote an essay on the harmony of essences. Why should not that idea be extended? The Peruvian Quipos adapted a language to the eyes, rather than to the ears. Why should not there be one for the nose? The more the senses can be used indifferently for each other, the more our understandings would be enlarged. A rose, a jessamine, a pink, a jonquil, and a honeysuckle, might signify the vowels; the consonants to be represented by other flowers. The Cape jessamine, which has two smells, was born a diphthong. How charming it would be to smell an ode from a nosegay, and to scent one's handkerchief with a favourite song. Indeed, many improve-

ments might be made on the Quipos themselves, especially as they might be worn, as well as perused. A trimming set on a new lute-string would be equivalent to a second edition with corrections. I am only surprised that, in a country like Peru, where gold and silver thread were so cheap, there was no *clinquant* introduced into their poetry. In short, Madam, I am so pleased with the idea of knotting verses, which is vastly preferable to anagrams and acrostics, that if I were to begin life again, I would use a shuttle, instead of a pen, and write verses by the yard. As it is, I have not been idle; nay, like any heaven-born genius, I have begun to write before I can read; and, though I have not yet learned to decipher, I can at least cipher like Atahualpa himself. As a proof of my proficience, pray, Madam, construe the following colours:—

Brown, blue, white, yellow green yellow yellow white, red brown brown blue white.

As I was writing this last line, I received your Ladyship's interpretation of the verses. Whoever made them they are excellent, and it would have been cruel to deprive me of them till I could have unravelled them. Pray tell me who made them, for they are really good and sterling. I am sorry I expressed myself so awkwardly, that you thought I disapproved of the Quipos. On the contrary, you see how much they have amused me. In good truth, I was glad of anything that would occupy me, and turn my attention from all the horrors one hears or apprehends. I am sorry I have read the devastation of Barbadoes and Jamaica, &c., &c.; when one can do no good, can neither prevent nor redress, nor has any personal share, by oneself or one's friends, is it not excusable to steep one's attention in anything? I fear, Madam, you and Lord Ossory have a suffering friend: poor Mr. James, I hear, is totally ruined—his whole property swept away! There is another dreadful

history, less known: the expedition sent against the Spanish settlements is cut off by the climate, and not a single being is left alive. The Duchess of Bedford told me last night that the poor soldiers were so averse, that they were driven to the march by the point of the bayonet, and that, besides the men, twenty-five officers have perished.

Lord Cornwallis and his tiny army are scarce in a more prosperous way. On this dismal canvas a fourth war is embroidered; and what, I think, threatens still more, the French administration is changed[2], and likely to be composed of more active men, and much more hostile to England. Our ruin seems to me inevitable. Nay, I know those who smile in the Drawing-room, that groan by their fireside: they own we have no more men to send to America, and think our credit almost as nearly exhausted. Can you wonder, then, Madam, if I am glad to play with Quipos—Oh, no! nor can I be sorry to be on the verge—does one wish to live to weep over the ruins of Carthage?

2134. To the Rev. William Mason.

Thursday night late, Jan. 4, 1781.

I have not written to you for several reasons. The best were, that I had nothing to tell you that you would wish to know, or like to hear. The worst is, that I have been much out of order, first, with a complaint in my bowels, which being weak, the gout took the opportunity and joined it. Then I caught cold, and then was lame in my ankle, which turned to a cough; but all these shapes were, I firmly believe, the gout, which I have long known for a harlequin, that can assume any form. I am now pretty well, and sit

[2] Sartine, Minister of Marine, and the Prince de Montbarrey, Minister for War, were dismissed, and replaced by the Marquis de Castries and the Marquis de Ségur.

down to chat with you; still I do not know where you are, but conclude if not at Aston that you will soon be there.

This good town is quite happy, for it has gotten a new plaything—a Dutch war; and the folks that are to gain by privateering, have persuaded those who are to pay the piper, to dance for joy. In the midst of this exultation came accounts that would make anybody shudder, but an overgrown capital, who care for nothing but their daily bread, news, and *circenses*. All Barbadoes and half Jamaica are annihilated. The inhabitants are buried or famishing. The shipping too has suffered deplorably. The events in America are not more flattering. Leslie, who had taken a walk into two or three open towns, one of which was Norfolk, that we burnt three or four years ago, has been recalled and is re-embarked, to try to save Lord Cornwallis, who has found the country as hostile as it was proclaimed to be friendly, and is in great danger too from five thousand men dispatched by Washington to strengthen Gates. An expedition sent against the Spanish settlements has been so totally destroyed by the climate that not a single man is left alive. The officers, to the number of twenty-five, are all dead too. My pen revolts at detailing such horrors! If I turn from them I have nothing else to tell you. I used to write of books as well as news—I have not seen one. Raspe's book indeed is in the press and will appear in February; I have been correcting the second sheet this evening.

Before Mr. Stonhewer went out of town he told me you had left your *Fresnoy* in the hands of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who is to write notes to it. I complain that you never showed it to me, but am content if it is near being published.

Mrs. Delany has been ill and is become very deaf. I saw Mr. Frederic Montagu with her, and he has been with me and seems perfectly recovered.

My chief business with you is to ask when you come? I suppose you will not condescend to answer, for you have as many *humours* as ancient Pistol. It don't signify; I have a plenary indulgence for the wayward moods of my friends: nay, like them better than the perfections of those I do not love—not that I believe the latter have one. Thus I prefer the letters you do not write to me, to the most sweet epistles from anybody from whom I should not wish to hear; you will say, one receives few such. I certainly do not, yet how many men wish for such! What is power but a desire of receiving thousands of flattering solicitations from the Lord knows whom! and an opportunity of being forced to oblige hundreds whom they wish at the devil! Well, I am past sixty-three; you will not have me long, and then I think you will be a little sorry. Adieu!

2135. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Jan. 9, 1781.

Your Ladyship takes so kind a part in all that concerns me, that, though I could not have told you how thunderstruck I was yesterday with news of the loss of Jersey[1], and alarmed for General Conway, who was but two hours in town, and had not time to see me, and set out[2] with a broken arm not quite recovered, yet I must communicate the sudden transition to joy, and relief from the worst part of my alarm. The troops in Jersey made a stand, gained a complete victory, and took all the remaining French that had landed, prisoners. Mr. Conway, I conclude, will proceed,

Letter 2135.—[1] Eight hundred French troops, led by the Baron de Rullecourt, landed at Jersey on Jan. 6, 1781, and seized Lieutenant-Governor Corbett in his bed. Major Pierson, as second in command, rallied the British troops and repulsed the invaders. Pierson was killed at the moment of victory, and De Rullecourt was also mortally wounded.

[2] For Jersey, of which he was Governor.

and thank his little army, who, without detracting from their merit, certainly owe some of it to his discipline—well, Madam, *je respire!* These rapid revulsions are a little too much for such harassed nerves as mine—but you forbid me—and I am silent.

I received two packets from your Ladyship last night, and at almost any other moment should have enjoyed them. I can now go over them again, and with pleasure, except the article of Miss Vernon. Your picture of her is very alarming —I tremble for your Ladyship, and for her brothers and sisters!—but alarms of every kind will be the lot of all that have any feeling for some time; and even hearts of rock will groan at last, for gold lies in the hearts of those rocks, and is as sensitive as the most shattered nerves. Nor will ducal coronets or portraits of Lord and Lady Spencer console them, if the mines of ore and diamonds are swept away. I had not heard that anecdote of Cunningham[3]. It is one of those traits, that whatever is said of comedy, nay, of the exaggeration of farce, would be too strong for the stage. The bombast passion of a lover in a romance might be carried to such an excess; but a governor writing on the ruins of a whole island levelled by the most fatal of all hurricanes, that his chief misery was the loss of—what?—his bracelets with the portraits of his idols—who would dare to bring such a revolting hyperbole on the stage?

Excuse me, Madam, but I do believe there is a great flaw in my memory; I cannot recollect what you allude to by *pigs*. Pray tell me, and, which you have not done, the author or authoress of the verses on the Quipos. The explication of mine is, if I ciphered it right, *je vous aime*. Perhaps I ought to have told you it was French.

Somebody knocks, I must finish; but it is not necessary to make excuses for short letters, when I so often send you

[3] Major-General James Cunningham, Governor of Barbadoes.

such long ones. It was Mr. Cambridge to ask news of Jersey, and to trumpet a victory of Carleton[4] the Lord knows where, at t'other end of the world; I neither satisfied his curiosity, nor listened to his gazette.

P.S. Mr. Crawfurd has called on me, too, and tells me Mr. James's loss will be but about 15,000*l.*, and that he can bear it; but the Storers are totally undone, and so George Selwyn says too. I pity them! I forgot to tell your Ladyship that I met Mrs. Montagu t'other night at a visit. She said she had been alone the whole preceding day, *quite hermetically sealed*—I was very glad she was uncorked, or I might have missed that piece of learned nonsense!

2136. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 9, 1781.

This can be but a short letter, for I have scarcely time to write it; but as to-day's papers would alarm you, and cannot carry the relief which arrived since they were printed, I cannot leave you for a moment under anxiety—I may say, for *me*, as I am so much concerned. In short, advice came by daybreak yesterday, that two thousand French (magnified to above four thousand) had landed on Saturday last in Jersey, had seized the lieutenant-governor in his bed, and were masters of the island. Orders were sent to Portsmouth to send what force could be had, and an express to General Conway to bid him repair thither. He came to town on wings of winds, and never pulled them off, and in two hours was on the road to Portsmouth. I did not see him, for he never wastes an instant on such occasions. Judge of my anxiety! It was for more than his broken arm. Well, at noon to-day we heard that the troops had rallied, attacked

[4] Major Carleton, who had captured Fort Anne and Fort George.

the French, gained a complete victory, pushed four hundred into the sea, and taken twelve hundred. These are the troops that Mr. Conway himself formed last year. *To me* this battle is worth the day at Blenheim.

2137. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 14, 1781.

I beg we may correspond no more in Peruvian, Madam, for it would take less time to send our letters to Lima to be interpreted, than to decipher three words. I return the alphabet, and humbly hope you had forgotten your A B C, for the words as I read them are, *on vous aimons*, which so good a grammarian as your Ladyship could not have written, if you remembered your colours; unless, which is much more probable, I have not expounded them rightly, for I certainly have no genius for so brocaded a language, which is like a piece of silk, all confusion, till it is unfolded. I will tell you what is of more importance. I asked the Duchess of Bedford t'other night at Princess Amelie's how she found Miss Vernon? 'Oh,' said she, 'I never saw her look so pretty; the journey had given her a charming colour.' Dr. Warren was with her three times yesterday, and says, 'If she does not go to three assemblies in an evening, she will be very well.' In truth, I do not much depend on this account; the glow might be hectic, and three visits in one day did not sound well; and, besides, her Grace is apt to see everything *couleur de rose*, still I think your own tenderness made you think her worse than she may be—I hope so.

You have seen Mr. Fox's combat with highwaymen in the papers; at first I concluded they were not highwaymen, but Highlanders, and that Messrs. Adam and Fullerton were ambitious of farther preferment.

I know nothing farther of Jersey, so contrary is the wind; nor anything else, but that Lord Carlisle is laid up with the gout.

Your Ladyship's history of Mr. Whitbread the brewer and his insolent wealth came very apropos to what the Princess said t'other night. She was talking of the crew of Irish peers, and said to the Duchess of Bedford, 'I would not give a straw to be a peer in this country—no, give me a good brewhouse; *that* is what makes one considerable here.' I doubt, if we brew as we bake, nothing will make us considerable long!

May not I ask, Madam, if you do not begin to think of London? Shall not Lady Anne learn of Vestris, while you have a shilling left? Pray let her be fit to make a curtsey like a Christian, in case the French should land. You will really keep her and yourself in the country till you will feel for your friends that are undone by hurricanes, or till you lament the war with Holland, though you might have a share in a privateer, and though John St. John has a contract for furnishing us with plaything-coaches, that are neater than the Dutch ones, and as cheap as Mr. Atkinson's rum[1]. Do but come to town, and you will not have a fear or a care left. The serene house of Brudenel will steep your senses and feelings in a delicious lethargy, and you will see everything through an eternal mist, as the Scotch do, and which they call second sight, not having the first gift of sight, which is to see things as they are.

I was much diverted with your setting Mrs. Montagu on her head, which indeed she does herself without the help of Hermes. She is one of my principal entertainments at

Letter 2137.—[1] Richard Atkinson (d. 1785), afterwards Alderman of London, Director of the East India Company, and Member of Parliament. He belonged to a City firm which traded chiefly with Jamaica. During the American War he contracted to supply the troops with rum. The rum he provided was new, and did great harm amongst the soldiers, many of whom died from the effects of it.

Mrs. Vesey's, who collects all the graduates and candidates for fame, where they vie with one another, till they are as unintelligible as the good folks at Babel. I am again interrupted—all one's letters, one's time, one's occupations are cracked by alarms! Colonel Conway is just arrived; his uncle and he were overtaken, nay, sailed in a tempest; they saw a transport with sixty poor men perish, and fear the cutter, that preceded to notify their arriving to Jersey, is lost. The *Emerald* has tossed for two days and nights, and General Conway's broken arm was hurt; Captain Marshal, a stout sailor, gave them up, the sailors were lashed, or could not stand to their work; the wind changed providentially, or they were lost on the rocks, and carried them to Plymouth, where the Conways landed: Colonel Conway found his wife miscarrying. Oh, I could fill my paper with distresses; but the Parliament will meet in two or three days, and vote that we are all felicity and glory! General Conway is stopped at Park Place to cure his bruises, as his island is safe—I have not time to say more.

Monday.

Colonel Conway was with me an hour this morning, and has given me such an account of their voyage as makes me shudder; and I have since received a note from Lady Aylesbury, to tell me her husband is in bed with the rheumatism and fatigue, but I fear with his arm, for his nephew says it was very painful to him, though neither the pain nor their peril made the smallest impression on his calmness, which astonished even his nephew, who knows him. Thank God he is alive! It is a time to feel any blessing to oneself, when so many are in anguish!

2138. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 18, 1781.

I have received your second letter about the Countess of Albany, and her retreat to Rome—or rather her imprisonment there. Are they Jews enough, if the Count should die, to uncanonize the Cardinal, and make him raise up issue to his brother, which the brother could not do for himself?

I told you last week of the loss and recovery of Jersey. General Conway, without losing a second, embarked at Portsmouth in the heat of such a storm, that a transport with sixty men was lost as he sailed, and the cutter that preceded, to notify his coming, has not been heard of since! He was tempested about for two whole days and nights, in such danger that the captain of the frigate despaired. Though it was a disappointment and vexation, for they knew nothing of the safety of the island, it was fortunate that they could not get out of the Channel, or they had probably been lost! With great difficulty they got into Plymouth, where they learnt the good news from the French themselves, who had been made prisoners in Jersey. Mr. Conway arrived at Park Place on Sunday last, but was forced to take to his bed, where he remained till yesterday, when he rose for a few hours. He had caught a cold, rheumatism all over, and a fever: what was worse, and perhaps the cause of his fever, a good-natured sailor, seeing him awkward at getting up the ladder into the frigate, and not knowing, or not considering, that he had a broken arm, gave it such a kind tug, that he almost broke it again. In that pain of body and mind he retained all his patience and tranquillity, and astonished even his own nephew, Colonel Conway[1], who knows him, and who repeated it to me with

Letter 2138.—[1] Robert, third son of Francis, Earl of Hertford. *Walpole.*

as much admiration as if he had never seen him before. I flatter myself that he will be able to come to town on Monday.

This is a most interesting chapter to me, and, as such, I perhaps have dwelt on it too long. But it intercepts nothing else. Not an event has happened, nor an account arrived of any, since I wrote last week. Tuesday the Parliamentary campaign will open again. I know full as little of what are to be its objects. Sir Joseph Yorke, not being returned, makes the conjecturers imagine that the reconciliation with Holland is not desperate. They say, too, that the Dutch have not yet issued letters of marque; but on those matters I talk quite in the dark, and with the vulgar. I hold to the world but by few threads; and, when an old man takes no pains to keep up the connection, the world is not at all solicitous to preserve it. Your nephew, I conclude, will soon be in town, and be more copious than I am.

It is not that I have less inclination than ever to be your journalist, but I now live in so confined a circle, that common occurrences rarely arrive to me till they have been in all the newspapers—and, to give those historians their due, nothing comes amiss to them; and, lest they should defraud their customers, they keep open shop for everything, true or false, or scandalous, or ever so private, or ever so little relative to the public. Ancient annalists thought nobody game below a monarch, or a general, or a high-priest. Modern intelligencers have no mercy on posterity; and, not considering how enormous the bulk of events is grown, contribute all in their power to store the world with the history of everybody in it. In truth, this duty has become so extensive, that it has totally given exclusion *here* to all the rest of the earth where we are not concerned.

We know no more of what passes in Europe than in Africa. To make amends, America and Asia are fully discussed. At this moment, I might, if I pleased, be perfectly acquainted with the King of Tanjore and all his affairs; not quite upon his own account, but because there is a contest at the India House about one Mr. Benfield[2]; who, by the way, is believed to be agent for the Nabob of Arcot, and to have retained nine members of Parliament in the interest of that petty sovereign—scandal, to be sure! And perhaps you think I am talking to you out of the Mogul Tales; but I have long told you that you have—can have—no idea of your own country. Well: look into the Roman History just before the fall of the Republic; you will find orations for King Deiotarus, and of proconsuls pensioned by tributary sovereigns. In short, you will see how splendid and vile the ruins were of a great empire!

Feb. 2nd.

When I thought you had received the preceding letter, I received it back from the post-office. I have a new footman, who cannot read; he put it into the common post, instead of carrying it to the Secretary's office; and after a fortnight it was returned to me. I send it, obsolete as it is, to show you that I have not been a defaulter; and because it is new in respect of subsequent events, for none have happened.

It is said that more than one surly rescript has been received from Russia, with whom we look to have war. The Parliament is most courtly: yesterday, indeed, there were an hundred and forty-nine for a censure on the prefer-

[2] Paul Benfield (d. 1810), M.P. for Cricklade. He entered the service of the East India Company in 1764, and had made large sums by money-lending on his own account. His loans to the Nawáb of Arcot and to the inhabitants of Tanjore were at this time the subject of inquiry by the Directors of the Company in London, who had recently caused the deposed Rajah of Tanjore to be reinstated in his kingdom.

ment of Sir Hugh Palliser to Greenwich Hospital, but above two hundred admired the choice.

I have been at Park Place to see General Conway, who has still a rheumatic fever, and keeps his room.

On Monday is to begin the trial of Lord George Gordon, which will at least occupy everybody for some days. I should be inclined to leave that subject to your nephew, but I do not know whether he is in town; at least I have not seen him, nor heard his name this winter.

The East Indian fleet, of vast value, is safely arrived in Ireland. Sir Thomas Rumbold is on board it, and his *value* is estimated at a million. I do not wonder that a nabob can afford to buy a gang of members of Parliament.

We have had a report of Lady Orford's death; but your last said that she was better.

2139. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 25, 1781.

You know I never pretend to continue my gazette, Madam, when Lord Ossory is in town. I can only send the dried skin of news, and he can give you the marrow. He was so good as to sit with me two hours yesterday morning.

I certainly do love, and have for forty years loved General Conway as my dearest friend, and consequently am very uneasy about him. He is extremely out of order still; and had I not been deceived about him on his return, and if I did not every day expect him to be brought to town, I should have gone to him. I am now waiting for the post, which I hope will bring me a more satisfactory account.

My gaming losses, Madam, have been trifling, and my luck, as usual, fluctuating, so as to make very little

difference. Still I do not decline the purse, which I shall value, though it should not have an enriching virtue.

I have seen Vestris, and remain in my senses.

2140. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1781.

We shall certainly have no difference about the Yorkshire address or directions. It would be very idle to enter into an altercation about the mode of wrapping up a medicine, which the patient never intends to swallow. It is true, I think *the disease* cannot dislike the prescription, for it finds more fault with half of the doctors, than with the distemper, but I look on the case as desperate; unless, as has been known to happen, poverty and fasting should root out the scurvy, when neither the college nor quacks could make any impression, and we are likely to experience whether fasting can expel the kind of devils by which we have been visited. Indeed I have many reasons for not disputing with you, I hate disputes. I have much higher opinion too of your abilities than of my own; and I suspect my own prejudices, and I know that persons who dispute, though with their friends, grow more angry with those they are angry with last, than with their enemies; as I see has happened to your York Association, which has wandered from the national cause to a county quarrel; and my last reason is that I despair. I think this country ruined: what may be saved from the general wreck I do not know, perhaps shall not see. Mr. Hartley's system, had it been adopted, was in my eyes the best to have been pursued—I mean, all possible efforts to put an end to the American war. He has proved that the continuation is positive destruction, any piddling may amuse, or turn attention aside, but in this age of the world to arm a stripling with a sling and a pebble

will not fell a giant; but why be metaphoric? ruin comes on with strides. Russia has sent us a thundering monitory[1]: and probably we shall soon be at war with the whole armed neutrality, which, like idiots, we imagined meant no more than neutral armament; well, I shall not be very sorry if all Europe combined compels us to make peace. I long to be able to die in quiet: we shall be but a little brow-beaten island, and as *that* is not the England in which I was born, I must be excused if I do not care about it.

I have been and am still very unhappy about General Conway. With a broken arm he embarked in a storm for Jersey at a moment's warning. He could not mount the ladder of the frigate; a sailor gave him a tug and wrenched that very arm. For two days and nights he was tossed in a furious tempest, could not reach his island, and at last was thrown on Plymouth. He returned quite lame again, with a fever from pain and a violent rheumatism from cold, and has kept his bed almost ever since. His last year's speech has just been published. Woodfall sent him word that he had notes of it and was going to print it, on which Mr. Conway thought it better to give him his own notes. I like much of it, though he and I do not agree in his sentiments about the recovery of America: for though I do not love to dispute, especially with my best friends, I cannot give up my opinions, if they are my opinions; but then I do not maintain that I must be in the right, except in judging for myself, and that leave which I take, I should be very absurd, nay, very impertinent, if I did not allow, but alas! he and you and I might as well be disputing about the time of keeping Easter: I most gladly turn away from politics to other matters.

LETTER 2140.—[1] 'Jan. 19, 1781. The Russian Minister delivered a memorial on our war with Holland, which occasioned the King to put off his levee and call a Council, in which he sat from eleven till three.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 442.)

Mr. Gilpin has sent me his book and dedication. I thank you for the latter being so moderate, yet he talks of my researches, which makes me smile; I know, as Gray would have said, how little I have *researched*, and what slender pretensions are mine to so pompous a term. Apropos to Gray, Johnson's Life, or rather criticism on his odes, is come out; a most wretched, dull, tasteless, *verbal* criticism, —yet, timid too. But he makes amends, he admires Thomson and Akenside, and Sir Richard Blackmore, and has reprinted Dennis's[2] criticism on *Cato*, to save time and swell his pay. In short, as usual, he has proved that he has no more ear than taste. Mrs. Montagu and all her Mænades intend to tear him limb from limb for despising their moppet Lord Lyttelton.

You will be diverted to hear that Mr. Gibbon has quarrelled with me. He lent me his second volume in the middle of November. I returned it with a most civil panegyric. He came for more incense, I gave it, but alas! with too much sincerity; I added, 'Mr. Gibbon, I am sorry *you* should have pitched on so disgusting a subject as the Constantinopolitan history. There is so much of the Arians and Eunomians, and semi-Pelagians; and there is such a strange contrast between Roman and Gothic manners, and so little harmony between a Consul Sabinus and a Ricimer, Duke of the palace, that though you have written the story as well as it could be written, I fear few will have patience to read it.' He coloured; all his round features squeezed themselves into sharp angles; he screwed up his button-mouth, and rapping his snuff-box, said, 'It had never been put together before'—*so well* he meant to add—but gulped it. He meant *so well* certainly, for Tillemont[3], whom he quotes in every page, has done the very thing.

[2] John Dennis (1657–1734).

[3] Louis Sébastien Lenain de Tillemont (1637–1698), ecclesiastical historian.

Well, from that hour to this I have never seen him, though he used to call once or twice a week; nor has sent me the third volume, as he promised. I well knew his vanity, even about his ridiculous face and person, but thought he had too much sense to avow it so palpably. The *History* is admirably written, especially in the characters of Julian and Athanasius, in both which he has piqued himself on impartiality—but the style is far less sedulously enamelled than the first volume, and there is flattery to the Scots that would choke anything but Scots, who can gobble feathers as readily as thistles. David Hume and Adam Smith are *legislators* and sages, but the homage is intended for his patron, Lord Loughborough.

So much for literature and its fops! except what interests me a thousand times more, and which I kept for the *bonne bouche*, your *Fresnoy* and 4th *Garden*[4]; I shall certainly ask for the former the instant I return (for I go to-morrow to Park Place, to see Mr. Conway, who cannot yet get to town), but not to interfere a moment with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who will execute his task so well. I long too for the *Garden*—I beg to recommend a note to you; last year a man at Turnham Green fixed up a board with this notice—*Ready made Temples sold here.* I would put over the Convocation, *Ready made Priests sold here.* The Turnhamite now sells only curricles and whiskies.

If my gazette is long, remember you ordered me to amuse Mr. Palgrave. I am glad you have him, and will do anything I can to fix him with you; pray assure him how much I am his. I can say no more, for I have not left half room to thank you for your very kind promise of coming to me in the spring. It amply compensates my disappointment of seeing you here; here I only get a snatch of you for an instant; nowhere I have enough of you. And which

[4] The fourth book of Mason's poem, *The English Garden.*

I lament more, for I am not selfish, the world has not enough of you—you know what I mean.

2141. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 31, at night, 1781.

It is not to save myself, I assure your Ladyship, that I decline writing when Lord Ossory is in town. I do write when he is not, because I am aware that any intelligence, that is not quite bad, and that takes care not to be false, is acceptable in the country. But when our Lord is here, and hears all that passes in Parliament, and at Brooks's, how chilled must sound the little that I learn in my own room, or in the small circle to which my acquaintance is reduced, or to which I have reduced it! I go little into the fashionable world, and less among politicians of either side; and to no public places: and of the young world, except of my own family, I determine to know nothing; or, if I cannot help it, to say nothing. One of the *reigning* topics (I have improperly used almost a treasonable word) is the Prince of Wales. With him I am positive never to occupy myself. I kissed the hand of his great-great-grandfather; would not it be preposterous to tap a volume of future history, of which I can never see but the first pages? I am sensible that those persons are happier, who do not feel what is improper for their age; but having always had a horror for juvenile ancientry, I will not make an exception in my own favour; nor should have any comfort in it. It is an absurd saying, that none know themselves; what the deuce then do they know? Do they think they bound, when they totter, or mistake wrinkles for beauty, and want of memory for thoughtlessness?

I have had another cause of silence, too, Madam; I have been at Park Place to see General Conway. I suspected

he was worse than I was told, and found he had been much worse than I suspected. He still has fever, and still rheumatism; his hands are swelled, and his face and legs emaciated; nor has he yet been out of his bedchamber. In short, he is much broken, and I doubt will be long before he recovers his strength. I came back but to-day to attend the Princess[1], and know absolutely nothing. I believe there is nothing new, for the Duchess of Bedford was there. Oh, yes, Captain Waldegrave has taken some rich Dutch prizes, for which I am very glad, as I like him much, and his cousins love him extremely.

Thank your Ladyship for the account of Sir Walter Raleigh's and his wife's pictures, but I shall not meddle with them. I have neither room nor money for more purchases. The stocks are so terribly fallen, that what trifles I have saved *from myself* for others, would not now pay the legacies I have given; and I must endeavour, if I live, to hoard the deficiency. This is an uncomfortable reflection, but who that reflects, has not some such to make? The nation, like a great boy, does not allow itself a moment's thought. It engages every day to support new wars, though it cannot manage one of them; ere long, to use the sublime nonsense of a Secretary of State, *it will be stunned into its senses*; but what good will its senses do then? This was a letter of obedience, but, I fear, ill-conducted to enliven your solitude.

2142. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 3, 1781.

With Mr. Palgrave's leave I will answer the essential parts of your letter before I attend to his entertainment, for which I am poorly qualified at present.

Letter 2141.—[1] The Princess Amelia.

I have not Dr. Johnson's *Lives*: I made a conscience of not buying them. However, having a mind to be possessed of these last volumes (I never even dipped into their predecessors), I inquired if I could buy the *Lives* separately from the edition of the Poems; no, the whole are sixty volumes. My purse made a conscience of laying out so much money for criticisms I despise, and for bodies of poetry that I never shall read again, and printed in so small a type that I could not read them if I would. I will try if I can borrow Gray's *Life* for you, and will send it with Mr. Conway's pamphlet, and will consult Mr. Stonhewer. I think you will not deem the dull comment on Gray worth your notice; if you do, pray do not forget Soame Jenyns's ode that is levelled at you both.

You oblige me infinitely by your concern for Mr. Conway. I left him better, or should not have left him, and had a still better account last night; yet this last shock on the neck of another has broken him exceedingly, and I doubt he will be long before he masters it. He is indeed far too virtuous for the times, yet they are such times that show such men! You will marvel to hear that on Thursday there was so large a minority as 149 on Charles Fox's motion for censuring the preferment of Palliser, but there were 214 that applauded it, particularly Governor Johnston, for with or without a *t*, that is a detestable name, and a corrupt one; I would as soon be a Macgregor.

The stocks believe that there is another rough rescript come from Russia, but though money is the only deity in vogue, the greatest bigots do not mind their own oracle.

I have told you all I know,—so little, that I fear Mr. Palgrave would not stay five minutes if you have no better a correspondent. What can I do? Oh, I will tell him a story. It is true, mine are not so long as Schehezarade's, but if he is as easily amused as Shah Baham, of ever-hearing

memory, I will answer as far as half a dozen go, to tell him as improbable tales as any in the *Arabian Nights*, or in the newspapers; yet the one I select is not of that kind, nor, unluckily, new to you; but when great personages of old ordered their fools to divert their guests, I fear they were forced to hear the repetition of stale jokes—ay, and I will warrant, laughed heartily at them again and again, as their successors might do now. Raspe's book goes on but slowly, I know not why; you shall have it the instant it is finished. It is not published by subscription. I am at the expense, and am to pay myself by the sale, if I can, which I doubt will not happen, for my own last volume of *Painters* does not go off.

Mr. Gilpin tells me, on my moving him to publish the charming book you showed me, that he would try aquatinta, if he could learn the secret; I shall consult Sandby—nay, I believe it is no longer a secret.

Mr. Wharton's third volume[1] is advertised for the end of this month, and Kate Macgraham[2] has published two more; yet does not advance beyond the death of Algernon Sidney. I believe England will be finished before her *History*.

On Monday is to commence Lord George Gordon's trial, which, I suppose, will obliterate Holland and Russia and everything else, even Vestris. If I hear any circumstances worth telling you and not in the newspapers, you shall know them directly, but it is difficult to anticipate the daily chronicles. Adieu!

P.S. Have you heard that your Archbishop went to the India House to vote for Benfield? Don't tell me that there is no metempsychosis. I am sure Dr. Markham was in Peru when the inhabitants were broiled to make them dis-

LETTER 2142.—[1] The third volume of the *History of Poetry*.

[2] Mrs. Macaulay had married a Mr. Graham as her second husband.

cover their gold, and held a crucifix in his hand. His Grace was going to take the oath with his beaver on; the clerk humbly remonstrated, and he took it off, which was surprising, for perhaps cardinals swear covered; and when he supported Lord Pigot's deposer, methinks his hat looked very red.

Lord Harcourt has just been here, and tells me he believes he can procure the method of the aquatinta for Mr. Gilpin.

2143. To the Rev. William Mason.

Monday noon, Feb. 5, 1781.

Perhaps you think, by my letters riding on the back of one another, that I am going to tell you of my Lord George Gordon. No, poor soul! he is at this minute in Westminster Hall, and I know nothing about him. Somehow or other I dare to say the constitution will be brought in guilty, for Lord Mansfield is the judge. But I have other guess things to say to you: I have got your *Fresnoy*; it is a new proof of what I have long thought, that there is nothing you cannot do if you please. This is the best translation I ever saw; there have been disputes between literal and paraphrastic translations, and no wonder, for a third sort, the true, was not known; yours preserves the sense and substance of every sentence, but you make a new arrangement, and state and express the author's thought better than he could. Horace would have excused you if you had been simply familiar in a didactic poem, but you would not be so excused, nor allow yourself negligence in your poetry. You have exchanged the poverty of Fresnoy's Latin for Pope's rich English, and every epithet contributes its quota to every precept and develops it. This is in the style of none of your other works, and though more

difficult, as masterly as any: in short, I have examined it with admiration, and only wonder how, with such powers and knowledge of the subject, you could confine yourself to the *matter* of the original. The shackles of translation have neither cramped your style, nor rendered it obscure; you have enriched your author without deviating, and improved his matter without adding to it, which is an achievement indeed. I do not flatter you; nay, you know I am frank enough upon most occasions, and were I porter of the Temple of Fame, I would not open the door to one of your babes, if it was not like you.

I think I shall soon compass a transcript at least of Gray's *Life* by Demogorgon[1] for you. I saw him last night at Lady Lucan's, who had assembled a *blue stocking* meeting in imitation of Mrs. Vesey's Babels. It was so blue, it was quite Mazarine-blue. Mrs. Montagu kept aloof from Johnson, like the West from the East. There were Soame Jenyns, *Persian* Jones, Mr. Sherlocke, the new court with Mr. Courtenay, besides the out-pensioners of Parnassus. Mr. Wraxhall[2] was not—I wonder why, and so will he, for he is popping into every spot where he can make himself talked of, by talking of himself; but I hear he will come to an untimely beginning in the House of Commons.

I shall return your *Fresnoy* as soon as I have gone through it once more, that Sir Joshua may go to work. I have proposed a subject to him that he seems to like; *Little children brought to Christ.* He will not make them all brothers, like Albano's Cupids.

Pray look into the last *Critical Review* but one; there you will find that David Hume in a saucy blockheadly note calls Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Bishop Hoadly, *despicable writers.* I believe that ere long the Scotch will call the

LETTER 2143.—[1] Dr. Johnson. [2] Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751–1831), the memoir writer, created a Baronet in 1813. He entered Parliament in 1780 as member for Hindon.

English *lousy*! and that Goody Hunter will broach the assertion in an anatomic lecture. Not content with debasing and disgracing us as a nation by losing America, destroying our Empire, and making us the scorn and prey of Europe, the Scotch would annihilate our patriots, martyrs, heroes, and geniuses. Algernon Sidney, Lord Russell, King William, the Duke of Marlborough, Locke, are to be traduced and levelled, and with the aid of their fellow-labourer Johnson, who spits at them while he tugs at the same oar, Milton, Addison, Prior, and Gray are to make way for the dull forgeries of Ossian, and such wights as Davy, and Johnny Home, Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, and Adam Smith!—Oh, if you have a drop of English ink in your veins, rouse and revenge your country! Do not let us be run down and brazened out of all our virtue, genius, sense, and taste, by Laplanders and Bœotians, who never produced one original writer in verse or prose.

Tuesday morning.

My servants tell me, for I have yet seen nobody else to-day, that Lord George was acquitted at five this morning —a wise manœuvre truly has been made; they punish him severely for eight months, and cannot convict him! now he will be a confessor. I must finish, for I have just heard that Lady Orford[3] is dead, and must write to my family and order mourning, &c. I doubt this letter is no retaining fee to Mr. Palgrave.

2144. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 6, 1781.

Last night, when I came home, I found your two letters of January 13th and 16th; the one to prepare me for, and

[3] Margaret Rolle, Countess of Orford, widow of Horace Walpole's eldest brother. She died at Pisa on Jan. 13, 1781, aged seventy-one.

the second to announce, Lady Orford's death. It has been reported here for a fortnight that she was dead: so, perhaps, somebody sent a courier to her son, or to Sharpe her lawyer; or, more probably, her heir might send one to Hoare. I have nothing to do with all that; but I have this minute written to her son, and sent him the individual copy of her will that I have received from you, and the few particulars you have told me.

I am sorry that when you first gave me notice of her illness, I did not beg you, in case of her death, to write to her son, which would have saved me the disagreeable necessity of writing to him, *which* I had totally left off, as he has so totally shaken off *me*. No matter; I always do what is right by *him*.

My first reflection naturally is, that, had my Lord had patience *but for a year*, he would have had no occasion to sell his pictures; supposing which, I do not think that, without his mother's death, he would have had *that* occasion. My own opinion is, that the wretches round him precipitated the sale, as money is more purloinable than a palace of pictures.

By the will it seems her Ladyship claims no power over her landed estates in England, though I have heard that she pretended to have a right to dispose of part: but all that is nothing to me. I am perfectly indifferent now what her son shall do; nor shall concern myself directly or indirectly with his actions, or intentions, or lunacies.

As I choose to shut out all serious thoughts on this event, I can divert myself with the Countess's disposition of her fortune, and the still more droll instrument of conveyance. When she married my brother, and flung herself into the arms of—science, she complained that her mother had so totally neglected her education, that she had not been taught to read—certainly not to spell even her own name,

for she writes herself *Margarite*, with a dozen other instances of bad orthography, not very consonant to her great pretensions to learning—or are they to evince her contempt for her own country? No disuse makes one forget one's own name.

I am not surprised that she does not name her son, for she seems to have chosen to brave all decorums—then why, if it is true that she had two daughters by Richcourt, pass them in silence? Pray tell me if you know anything of them, or if there were such. It is mere curiosity; I had no resentment to her, nor wish to preserve her frailties, nor did she in other respects seem to disguise them—Richcourt was at least more creditable than Mozzi[1]. The wretched provision she makes for her woman shows a want of feeling; so does her utter neglect of all her other servants but one —but enough—her will, short as it is, suggests twenty observations—but I do not want to write a comment—I never did think much of her understanding, and her will justifies me. As to directions, my dear Sir, I have none to give you. My nephew, very possibly, may not condescend to answer my letter—certainly will not employ me, or acquaint me with a tittle of his affairs; they who govern him will not admit one who would regard his interest, and not theirs—in truth, I hope that in this case he will treat me as ill as he has done in all others.

I wrote to you but t'other day, and have no public news to add but what I scarce know yet, the trial of Lord George Gordon. It was yesterday, and they say he was *acquitted* at five this morning; but this I have learnt only from my servants, for I have been writing to notify my Lady Orford's death to my relations, that they may mourn, and bespeaking mourning, and doing such necessary things; and have seen

Letter 2144.—[1] A Florentine gentleman, whom Lady Orford made her heir. *Walpole.*

nobody yet, and, in fact, did not care a straw about my Lord George any more than, when any living creature is trying for his life, I feel at the moment, and wish him to escape. I must at present leave off and go to Sir Edward, who will care still less than I do about all that relates to the late Countess.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter, Lucas, Lord Orford's lawyer, has been here, and says that he very lately inquired at Mr. Hoare's what money Lady O. had there, and was told, but 4,000*l.*

2145. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1781.

I will not leave you a moment in suspense about the safety of your very valuable volume, which you have so kindly sent me, and which I have just received, with the enclosed letters, and your other yesterday. I have not time to add a word more at present, being full of business, having the night before last received an account of Lady Orford's death at Pisa, and a copy of her will, which obliges me to write several letters, and to see my relations. She has left everything in her power to her *friend* Cavalier Mozzi, at Florence; but her son comes into a large estate, besides her great jointure. You may imagine how I lament that he had not patience to wait sixteen months, before he sold his pictures!

I am very sorry you have been at all indisposed. I will take the utmost care of your fifty-ninth volume (for which I give you this receipt), and will restore it the instant I have had time to go through it.

Witness my hand,
Hor. Walpole.

2146. To the Rev. William Cole.

Feb. 9, 1781.

I had not time, dear Sir, when I wrote last, to answer your letter, nor do more than cast an eye on your MS. To say the truth, my patience is not tough enough to go through Wolsey's negotiations. I see that *your* perseverance was forced to make the utmost efforts to transcribe them. They are immeasurably verbose; not to mention the blunders of the first copyist. As I read only for amusement, I cannot, so late in my life, purchase information on what I do not much care about, at the price of a great deal of *ennui*. The old wills at the end of your volume diverted me much more than the obsolete politics. I shall say nothing about what you call *your old leaven*. Everybody must judge for himself in those matters: nor are you or I of an age to change long-formed opinions, as neither of us is governed by self-interest.

Pray tell me how I may most safely return your volume. I value all your MSS. so much, that I should never forgive myself if a single one came to any accident, by your so obligingly lending them to me. They are great treasures, and contain something or other that must suit most tastes; not to mention your amazing industry, neatness, and legibility, with notes, arms, &c. I know no such repositories. You will receive with your manuscript Mr. Kerrich's and Mr. Gough's letters. The former is very kind. The inauguration of the *Antiquated* Society is burlesque,—and so is their dearth of materials for another volume: can they ever want such rubbish as compose their preceding annals?

I think it probable that *story* should be *stone*—however, I never piqued myself on recording every mason. I have preserved but too many that did not deserve to be mentioned. I dare to say, that when I am gone, many more such will be added to my volumes.

I had not heard of poor Mr. Pennant's misfortune. I am very sorry for it, for I believe him an honest good-natured man. He certainly was too lively for his proportion of understanding, and too impetuous to make the best use of what he had. However, it is a credit to us antiquaries to have one of our class disordered by vivacity.

I hope your goutiness is dissipated, and that this last fine week has set you on your feet again.

Yours most sincerely and gratefully,

H. W.

P.S. Your letters were all put into the post.

2147. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1781.

The lost sheep is found; but I have more joy in one just person than in ninety and nine sinners that do not repent; in short, the renegade Gibbon is returned to me, after ten or eleven weeks, and pleads having been five of them at Bath. I immediately forgave even his return; yet pray do not imagine that I write to announce this recovery; no! it is to impart what he told me. He says that somebody asked Johnson if he was not afraid that *you* would resent the freedoms he has taken with Gray, 'No, no, Sir; Mr. Mason does not like rough handling.' I hope in the Muses that you will let him see which had most reason to fear rough handling. The saucy Caliban! I don't know when I shall get you his blubber[1], but I have sent again to my bookseller about it.

I have restored your *Fresnoy* with regret. The more I have studied it the better I like it—it will always be standard. I repeat that there is the precise sense of every sentence, and yet they are not translated. They are like

Letter 2147.—[1] Johnson's Life of Gray.

the same pair of legs, before being taught to dance and afterwards. Fresnoy gives the precepts, and you tell him how to state and enounce them. As I have ambition of appertaining to your poem, I humbly beg leave to amend one word, in a certain line towards the end; for

'Sons of her choice and *sharers* of her fire,'

read 'partners.'

You will laugh, especially after my last letter, when I tell you that I am chosen honorary member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. I received the notification since I began this letter. Lord Buchan, the founder (under the patronage of Saint Bute), was many years ago a little my acquaintance; I have not even seen him at least these dozen years, nor ever had any correspondence with him but once, about two years ago, when he wrote to ask me what portraits of Scottish kings or queens I knew of in England. It is impossible to have less respect than I have for Societies of Antiquaries, who seldom do anything but grow antiquated themselves. However, as an honorary title exacts neither function nor *vote*, I have accepted it civilly, especially as it will show contempt for our own fools, from amongst whom I scratched out my name. However, I conceive that the bones of my memory may some time or other be dug up and burned at Edinburgh, as Peter Martyr's were at Oxford[2].

My new dignity of F.S.S.A. will not comport with amusing Mr. Palgrave to-day. I have taken an oath on Ossian to have no imagination, no invention; for forgeries are *in*tentions, not in*ven*tions. Still I shall not wear my

[2] Pietro Martire Vermigli (1500–1562), Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. The bones were not his, but those of his first wife, Catherine Dammartin, buried in the Cathedral at Oxford. Her body was exhumed in 1557 with a view to burning it as that of a heretic. No evidence of heresy was obtained, and the body was reinterred in the following year.

new plaid robes and blue bonnet beyond my inauguration week, and shall soon relapse into a South Briton; though if I should say *The* 15, *The* 45, you will remember my connection north of the Tweed.

P.S. Is not it droll that I, who never sought for, canvassed for, or received any mark of distinction in my days, should receive a compliment from Edinburgh?

2148. To the Earl of Buchan.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 10, 1781.

I was honoured yesterday with your Lordship's card, with the notification of the additional honour of my being elected an honorary member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland; a grace, my Lord, that I receive with the respect and gratitude due to so valuable a distinction; and for which I must beg leave, through your Lordship's favour, to offer my most sincere and humble thanks to that learned and respectable Society.

My very particular thanks are still more due to your Lordship, who, in remembrance of ancient partiality, have been pleased at the hazard of your own judgement, to favour an old humble servant, who can only receive honour from, but can reflect none on, the Society into which your Lordship and your associates have condescended to adopt him. In my best days, my Lord, I never could pretend to more than having flitted over some flowers of knowledge. Now worn out and near the end of my course, I can only be a broken monument to prove that the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland are zealous to preserve even the least valuable remains of a former age, and to recompense all who have contributed their mite towards illustrating our common island. I am, &c.

2149. To Lord Hailes.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 10, 1781.

I was very intimate, Sir, with the last Lord Finlater when he was Lord Deskfoord. We became acquainted at Rome on our travels, and though, during his illness and long residence in Scotland, we had no intercourse, I had the honour of seeing him sometimes during his last visit to England; but I am an entire stranger to the anecdote relative to my father and Sir William Windham. I have asked my brother, who was much more conversant in the scenes of that time; for I was abroad when Sir William died, and returned to England but about six months before my father's retirement, so that having been at school and at Cambridge, or in my infancy, during Sir Robert's administration, the little I retain from him was picked up in the last three years of his life, which is an answer, Sir, to your inquiries why, among other reasons, I have always declined writing his Life; for I could in reality say but little on my own knowledge; and yet should have the air of being good authority, at least better than I should truly be. My brother, Sir Edward, who is eleven years older than I am, never heard of your anecdote. I may add, that latterly I lived in great intimacy with the Marchioness of Blandford (Sir William's widow), who died but a year and a half ago at Sheene, here in my neighbourhood; and with Lady Suffolk, who could not but be well acquainted with the history of those times from her long residence at court, and with whom, for the last five or six years of her life here at Twickenham, I have had many and many long conversations on those subjects, and yet I never heard a word of the supposed event you mention. I myself never heard Sir W. Windham speak but once in the House of Commons, but have always been told that his style and behaviour were

most liberal and like a gentleman; and my brother says, there never passed any bitterness or acrimony between him and our father.

I will answer you as fairly and candidly, Sir, about Archibald Duke of Argyll, of whom I *saw* at least a great deal. I do believe Sir Robert had a full opinion of his abilities as a most useful man. In fact, it is plain he had; for he depended on the Duke, when Lord Islay, for the management of your part of the island, and, as I have heard at the time, disobliged the most firm of the Scottish Whigs by that preference. Sir Robert supported Lord Islay against the Queen herself, who hated him for his attachment to Lady Suffolk; and he was the only man of any consequence whom her Majesty did not make feel how injudicious it was (however novel) to prefer the interest of the mistress to that of the wife. On my father's defeat, his warm friends loudly complained of Lord Islay as having betrayed the Scottish boroughs, at the election of Sir Robert's last Parliament, to his brother, Duke John. It is true, too, that Sir Robert always replied, 'I do not accuse him.' I must own, knowing my father's manner, and that when he said but little, it was *not* a favourable symptom, I did think, that if he *would* not accuse, at least he did not acquit. Duke Archibald was undoubtedly a dark shrewd man. I recollect an instance, for which I should not choose to be quoted just at this moment, though it reflects on nobody living. I forget the precise period, and even some of the persons concerned; but it was in the minority of the present Duke of Gordon, and you, Sir, can probably adjust the dates. A regiment had been raised of Gordons. Duke Archibald desired the command of it to a favourite of his own. The Duchess-Dowager insisted on it for her second husband[1]. Duke A.

Letter 2149.—[1] Staats Long Morris, of New York, afterwards a General in the English army.

said, 'Oh, to be sure, her Grace must be obeyed'; but instantly got the regiment ordered to the East Indies, which had not been the reckoning of a widow remarried to a young fellow.

At the time of the Rebellion, I remember that Duke Archibald was exceedingly censured in London for coming thither, and pleading that he was not empowered to take up arms. But I believe I have more than satisfied your curiosity, Sir, and that you will not think it very prudent to set an old man on talking of the days of his youth.

I have just received the favour of a letter from Lord Buchan, in which his Lordship is so good as to acquaint me with the honour your new Society of Antiquarians have done me in nominating me an honorary member. I am certainly much flattered by the distinction, but am afraid his Lordship's partiality and patronage will in this only instance do him no credit. My knowledge even of British antiquity has ever been desultory and most superficial; I have never studied any branch of science deeply and solidly, nor ever but for temporary amusement, and without any system, suite, or method. Of late years I have quitted every connection with societies, not only Parliament, but those of our Antiquaries and of Arts and Sciences, and have not attended the meetings of the Royal Society. I have withdrawn myself in a great measure from the world, and live in a very narrow circle idly and obscurely. Still, Sir, I could not decline the honour your Society has been pleased to offer me, lest it should be thought a want of respect and gratitude, instead of a mark of humility and conscious unworthiness. I am so sensible of this last, that I cannot presume to offer my services in this part of our island to so respectable an assembly; but if you, Sir, who know too well my limited abilities, can at any time point out any informa-

tion that is in my power to give to the Society (as in the case of royal Scottish portraits, on which Lord Buchan was pleased to consult me), I shall be very proud to obey your and their commands, and shall always be with great regard their and your most obedient humble servant.

P.S. I do not know whether I ever mentioned to you or Lord Buchan, Sir, a curious and excellent head in oil of the Lady Margaret Douglas at Mr. Carteret's, at Hawnes in Bedfordshire, the seat of his grandfather, Lord Granville; I know few better portraits. It is at once a countenance of goodness and cunning, a mixture I think pleasing. It seems to imply that the person's virtue was not founded on folly or ignorance of the world; it implies perhaps more, that the person would combat treachery and knavery, and knew how. I could fancy the head in question was such a character as Margaret Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis the First, who was very free in her conversations and writings, yet strictly virtuous; debonnaire, void of ambition; yet a politician when her brother's situation required it. If your Society should give into engraving historic portraits, this head would deserve an early place. There is at Lord Scarborough's, in Yorkshire, a double portrait (perhaps by Holbein or Lucas de Heere) of Lady Margaret's mother, Queen Margaret, and her second husband.

2150. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, Feb. 11, 1781.

On Friday evening I received the probate of Lady Orford's will, and your two letters, in one of which you mention the doubts of the Florentine lawyers on the validity of the disposition. As I was to come hither yesterday morning, I could not send for my Lord's lawyer, but have desired him

to be with me on Tuesday, when I shall deliver the probate to him. I was very sorry to hear of the doubts, and shall consider well—nay, consult the most conscientious persons I can—before I acquaint my Lord with them. I do not like questioning of wills where the intention of the testator is evident; nor are there many cases in which I should approve of it, except on strong suspicions of foul practices, or notorious incapacity of the deceased. I am doubly authorized to hesitate, for my Lord's lawyer told me last week that his Lordship had declared to him previously to my Lady's death, that he would not dispute her will; and this morning I received a letter from himself, in answer to my notification, in which he repeats the same, though he says he has *for precaution* entered a caveat. This does look a little as if his *worthy* counsellors did not quite digest his filial piety—and have therefore, *for precaution*, persuaded him to enter a caveat, till they can cure him of his right intention. His letter to me is as cold and formal as it could be to you, if you had written directly to him; nor is there the most slight implication of any relation between us. It is evidently drawn up for him, and no doubt with the intention of giving me to understand that he has no thoughts of ever remembering that I am his uncle. This is just the cunning of low rogues—but they are just the people that might reflect, that when I pay no court to *him*, and defy *them*, it is not probable that I have any expectations from him—I believe they fear I should be immortal, by supposing that at sixty-three, I expect to survive a man of forty-eight. There is one aim at propriety that is not likely to have been my Lord's own, as it is too vulgar. He says he shall send Sir Edward and me *rings*—not because brothers-in-law to his mother, but because we were formerly acquainted with her. Mourning rings are as much out of fashion amongst people of rank as plum-porridge. I am to have a ring for you too, which, with your leave, I shall

give to your nephew, and not trouble you with—nay, by her Ladyship's will you ought not to have above half a ring, as her regard for you had fallen 50 per cent.[1], as she showed by her rough draft—but to be serious: I did tell Lucas that my Lord was much in the right not to contest the will, as it would revive a thousand scandalous stories that had better die with her. In short, though I could have no esteem for her, I shall be extremely averse from being even an indirect instrument of disputing her will; and, should I be advised in duty to inform my Lord of the cavil, I shall, I think, desire you to convey the notice to him through some other channel. Nothing but my becoming persuaded that I ought to acquaint him with the doubts on the validity, shall make me contribute to his knowing them. I shall consult General Conway, who is conscience itself; and Lord Camden, who, though a lawyer, has left off business, and who, I trust, is too old to think merely as a lawyer, unless as one who has presided in a court of *equity*.

Lord Orford may act by me as he pleases, or, poor man! as his creatures please. I will neither pay court to him, for he has used me with extravagant ingratitude; nor ever do but what is strictly right about him, as I have always done, with a degree of delicacy that worldly prudence would condemn, and which certainly has been very prejudicial to my family. But I cannot lament what I did from principle and tenderness; nor can I vindicate myself to the world so fully as I might, while he has such a measure of sense as would be wounded if I talked too openly of his madness. The wretches about him, I do not doubt, have whispered many lies to my prejudice—still I have the comfort of never having found that they have made any impression beyond their own grovelling circle. My conduct to this nephew

LETTER 2150.—[1] Lady O. left Sir H. M. £50; in the draft she had designed £100. *Walpole.*

has been the whitest part of my life; and that consciousness is of much more value than his whole estate, which I will not obtain, though I should survive him, by stooping to any dirt or indirect behaviour. I must always do Sir Edward the honour and justice to say that he does not care a straw about the estate, nor ever thinks of his nephew but when I mention him.

Tuesday evening.

I have again considered the case, and as Lord Orford inherits his mother's estate and jointure, I cannot conceive that 10,000*l.* a year are not sufficient *légitime*. Can she be interpreted to have *disinherited* a son who succeeds to so much? I think you should in justice suggest this plea to Cav. Mozzi.

I have seen Lucas, my Lord's lawyer, again to-day. I did not mention the cavil, but bade him warn my Lord not to be too precipitate in acquiescing under the will, till he was more fully informed, lest he should preclude himself from contesting it, if any doubts should arise on its legality. This was acting equally fairly by him. Mr. Conway does not think it requisite for me to acquaint my Lord with the doubt, unless it shall appear strengthened. I have stated my scruple to Lord Camden, and expect his answer to-morrow[2].

In the meantime, I have told Lucas that I had nothing to do with my Lady's or my Lord's affairs, nor desired to interfere in them, and that therefore I thought it would be the shortest and best way for my Lord to give him (Lucas) orders to correspond with you, if they have anything to say. I beg your pardon for throwing this trouble on you; but when I am cast off in so outrageous a manner, I cannot stoop to be only a tool, and one that may thence seem to

[2] Lord Camden thought it right to mention the cavil, and Mr. W. did; but it proved a frivolous one. *Walpole.*

interest myself curiously in my Lord's affairs. It is plain that he, who with no semblance of a quarrel to me, can treat me in so injurious a manner, after such tried services and repeated obligations, must have had the most abominable lies told him of me. I will indubitably take the first occasion that shall present itself of making my whole conduct towards him known, and that of his creatures. I care not a rush about his fortune; but I will not part with my character, which I prefer to all he has; and had much rather lose the former, were it likely to come to me, than the latter. Indeed it is a proof I do, when I keep no management with the wretches who entirely possess him. He would be as guilty as they, were he clearly in his senses, for he knows that no argument could induce me, for my own or my family's interest, to take out the statute of lunacy, though Dr. Jebbe and Dr. Battie pronounced him *incurable*. If I did not think him always mad to a degree, I must have the worst opinion of his heart. I did pique myself on treating him with far greater tenderness than ever lunatic was treated, not only for his sake, but as a precedent for others in that unhappy condition—and have ten thousand times more satisfaction in having given that example, than I could have in the enjoyment of his fortune.

I know no news—in fact I have been entirely taken up with this affair. The accession of fortune to my Lord makes not the slightest change in my resolutions, it rather strengthens them; for I should despise myself if his additional wealth could make me stoop to flatter a madman.

P.S. Poor Lady Dick[3] is dead, and Mrs. Anne Pitt; the latter in a madhouse.

[3] Wife of Sir John Dick, formerly Consul at Leghorn. *Walpole.*

2151. To the Rev. William Mason.

Monday night, Feb. 19, 1781.

It has not been from want of materials, if I had chosen to work them up, that I have not written to you very lately; but though I hold it delectable enough in one's dotage to prattle and gossip of the doings of the courts of one's younger days, I do not think it so decorous to invert one's Brantôme-hood and limp after and repeat the tattle of Drawing-rooms that are scarce fledged. A sovereign may be philosopher or concentred enough in his own rays to disregard terrestrial tempests, and to be more occupied by the spots in his own orbit than by the mouldering away of his empire. For my part I have too much mortal clay about me to soar so much above matter, and to divert myself only with the music or discord of the spheres.

All this tedious proem is but to say that I have not wanted news, ay, and news that employs this whole town, if I would have condescended to tell you who has or who has not been at Cumberland House, or at the Queen's ball, or how King George and his brother, Duke Henry, have quarrelled about the servants of the Prince of Wales not being suffered to dine with his Royal Highness Duke Henry, and how Duke Henry was not invited to the ball at the Queen's House, with a deal of such scimble scamble stuff, which has totally obliterated the memory of all the wars that we have with all the world. Do not be surprised; if we attended to anything above such puerilities, we should not be in the situation we are. I still do believe that distress will at last open our eyes, but I believe, too, that we shall soon shut them again. There is not energy enough left in us to produce any effect. One may judge from the *nature* of our dissipations as much as from the dissipation itself. The age that souses into

every amusement and folly that is presented to it, has not imagination enough to strike out anything of itself. Mrs. Cornelys, Almack, and Dr. Graham are forced to advertise diversions by public sale, and everybody goes indolently and mechanically to them all, without choice or preference. They who are *called the people of fashion* or the *ton* have contributed nothing of their own but *being too late*; nay, actually do go to most public diversions after they are over. Your Yorkshire reformers, though not content with Mr. Burke's bill, will gather no prophetic comfort from the treatment it received to-day. I was at Mrs. Delany's this evening, when Mr. Frederic Montagu arrived from the House. They had put off the second reading till Friday, because Wednesday is the Fast Day, and Thursday Vestris's benefit. God has His day, a French dancer his, and then the national senate will be at leisure to think whether it will save three-halfpence-farthing out of eighteen millions that are to be raised in hopes of protracting the war, till we want at least eighteen millions more.

Was not you edified with the last *Gazette*? When we expected to hear that all Washington's army was catched in a drag-net, and that Lord Cornwallis had subdued and pacified all Virginia and Carolina, we were modestly told that his Lordship and his handful of men had been sick, but, thank you, are a little better; and that Colonel Ferguson[1] was beaten, and Colonel Tarleton[2] had had a puny advantage; all which we knew two months ago.

To-day we are very sorry for what however we do not care a straw about. Well, the grand fleet, that was to fetch home Gibraltar and place it out of harm's way in the Isle of Sky,

LETTER 2151. — [1] Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Ferguson (1744-1780), killed on Oct. 9, 1780, at King's Mountain, North Carolina.
[2] Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton (1754-1833), afterwards a Baronet and G.C.B. He was a well-known cavalry leader, and at this time in command of the British legion.

cannot sail[3]. Governor Johnstone, the honestest man in the world, has written to Lord Hillsborough (for he would not trust Lord Sandwich, whom a fortnight ago he thought the second man in honesty in *South* Britain) complaining that the fleet is rotten, and cannot sail; nay, he has sent up a yard and a half of worm-eaten plank, which he humbly begs his Majesty himself will taste and be convinced. I do not answer for a syllable of truth in this narrative, though it was told me by a Scottish Earl who never gave a vote in his days against any court.

I have not yet been able to get you Gray's Life. My bookseller had blundered, and after trusting to him so long, he brought me the preceding volumes: but I am on a new scent, and hope at least to send you a transcript of that single Life; though I wish you to see the whole set, nay, those old ones; I dipped into them, and found that the tasteless pedant admires that wretched buffoon Dr. King, who is but a Tom Brown in rhyme; and says that *The Dispensary*, that *chef-d'œuvre*, can scarce make itself read. This is prejudice on both sides, equal to that monkish railer Père Garasse[4]. But Dr. Johnson has indubitably neither taste nor ear, criterion of judgement, but his old woman's prejudices; where they are wanting, he has no rule at all; he prefers Smith's[5] poetic, but insipid and undramatic *Phædra and Hippolitus* to Racine's *Phèdre*, the finest tragedy in my opinion of the French theatre, for, with Voltaire's leave, I think it infinitely preferable to *Iphigénie*, and so I own I do *Britannicus*, *Mahomet*, *Alzire*, and some others; but I will allow Johnson to dislike Gray, Garth, Prior—ay, and every genius we have had, when he cries up Blackmore,

[3] Johnstone had recently been appointed to command a squadron to act against the Cape of Good Hope.

[4] Father François Garasse (1585–1631), a Jesuit. 'Il ne savait ménager ni les expressions, ni les injures; et il semblait qu'il ne se possédait plus lorsqu'il écrivait contre quelqu'un.' (*Dict. Hist.*)

[5] Edmund Smith (1672–1710).

Thomson, Akenside, and Dr. King; nay, I am glad that the measure of our dullness is full. I would have this era stigmatize itself in every respect, and be a proverb to the nations around, and to future ages. We want but Popery to sanctify every act of blindness. Hume should burn the works of Locke, and Johnson of Milton, and the atheist and the bigot join in the same religious rites, as they both were pensioned by the same piety. Oh, let us not have a ray of sense or throb of sensation left to distinguish us from brutes! let total stupefaction palliate our fall, and let us resemble the Jews, who when they were to elect a god, preferred a calf!

Tuesday.

Upon stricter inquiry, I find that Johnson has not yet published his new *Lives*, but only given away a few copies.

An account is said to be come from New York, that above two thousand of Washington's army have left him for want of pay, but remain encamped at some distance; have refused to join Clinton, and have sent to the Congress that they will return to Washington if they are paid; if not, that they will not disband. Governor Johnstone's remonstrance is already whittled down to a complaint of one particular ship not being ready.

2nd P.S. Lord Harcourt has got me from Taylor[6] at Bath the method of the aquatinta, which I have sent to Mr. Stonhewer this morning to transmit to him.

2152. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 26, 1781.

I have received your short letter, my dear Sir, with its enclosed paper, which may be, and I hope is, good law in

[6] John Taylor (d. 1806), landscape painter and etcher.

Tuscany, but would scarcely be admitted here; our courts will hardly admit of a paper that says, 'If I am not good as a will, I am as a codicil; and if not as a codicil, at least as the donative of a dead person.' We allow our lawyers to make what distinction they please, or can; but our lawyers allow nobody else to invent evasions. However, as I respect wills, I trust this will stand good, as both the property and the law are out of the reach of our attorneys. I will not answer, indeed, that the money in Mr. Hoare's hands, and the arrears of rent, and the furniture and stock of the late Countess's estates, may escape so well. Coney, my Lord's prime minister, is an attorney, and, I *know*, a rascal. I have sent the paper to Lucas, my Lord's other lawyer—to himself I would not write, after such a letter as I received on notifying his mother's death.

I shall not weary you again with saying any more about him. I have done with him! An affair is going to take place that is not unconnected with him, and that gives me some satisfaction. Lord Walpole's eldest son, who at present stands in the light of heir-apparent to both branches of the family, and whom Lord Orford is at least bound to my late uncle to make his heir in succession, is going to marry one of my numerous nieces, Lady Mary Churchill's younger daughter[1]. It is a match of love; she is a very fine girl, but without a shilling. Lord Walpole dislikes the match much, entirely on that last defect: but the son is a most honourable young man; and the father, who is good-natured, has at last given his consent.

Thus, if Lord Orford's madness and the villainy of his counsellors (and, I must add, his own want of principle) does not reverse what he promised, *all* the descendants of my father, the author of the greatness of the whole family,

LETTER 2152.—[1] Sophia (d. 1797), daughter of Col. Charles Churchill; m. (July 27, 1781) Hon. Horatio Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford.

will not be deprived of his fortune. My sister Malpas's[2] posterity, to whom it ought first to descend after my brother and me, will be defrauded; but, plundered as Houghton is, the possessors will still look up to the memory of its illustrious founder—and his blood will be better derived to them, than it would have been through the late Countess's most doubtful son[3].

But how weak are these visions about ancestors and descendants! and how extraordinarily weak am I to harbour them, when I see that a madman, a housemaid, and an attorney can baffle all the views Sir Robert himself had entertained! Could he foresee that his grandson would sell his collection of pictures, or that his grand-daughter would marry the King's brother?—Yet, if one excluded visions, and attended only to the philosophy of reflection,—if one always recollected how transitory are all the glories in the imagination, how insipid, how listless would life be!

Are fame or science more real! Would we know what is past, on the truth of what history can we depend? Would we step without the *palpable* world, what do we learn but by guess, or by that most barren of all responses, calculation? Is anything more lean than the knowledge we attain by computing the distance or magnitude of a planet? If we could know more of a world than its size, would not its size be the least part of our contemplation? All I mean is, that it matters not with what visions, provided they are harmless, we amuse ourselves; and that, so far from combating, I often love to entertain them. When one has outlived one's passions and pursuits, one should become inactive or morose if one's second childhood had not its rattles and fables like the first.

[2] Mary (d. 1731), daughter of Sir Robert Walpole (afterwards Earl of Orford); m. (1723) George Cholmondeley, Viscount Malpas, afterwards Earl of Cholmondeley.

[3] Seven lines erased in MS.

I am the more willing to play with local and domestic baby-houses, as the greater scene is still more comfortless; though what is one's country but one's family on a larger scale? What was the glory of immortal Rome, but the family pride of some thousand families? All sublunary objects are but great and little by comparison. You and I have lived long enough to see Houghton and England emerge, the one from a country gentleman's house to a palace, the other from an island to an empire; and to behold both stripped of their acquisitions, and lamentable in their ruins. I will push the comparison between large and petty objects no farther, though both have compounded the present colour of my mind. I came hither yesterday, but left nothing new in town. The follies of a great capital are only new in the persons of their favourites.

The fanatic Lord George Gordon was the reigning hero a fortnight ago: the French dancers, Vestris and his son, have dethroned him, and are the reigning bubbles in the air at this moment. On Thursday was sevennight there was an opera for the sufferers by the late dreadful calamities at Barbadoes and Jamaica; the theatre was not half full. Last Thursday was the benefit of Vestris and son; the house could not receive and contain the multitudes that presented themselves. Their oblations amounted to fourteen hundred pounds.

You talk of Dutch prizes: a late storm has paid them in a moment, and thrown into their arms—at least driven and wrecked on their coast—one of our newly arrived Indiamen, worth two hundred thousand pounds. We consoled ourselves with the revolt of a large body of Washington's troops; but, when Sir Henry Clinton invited them to his standard, they impolitely bound his messengers hand and foot, and sent them to the Congress. We are apt to sing *Io Paean* too soon, and only show how much we want good news, by accepting

everything as such; though the second report generally proves sinister.

2153. To the Rev. William Cole.

Dear Sir, Berkeley Square, March 2, 1781.

As you have not lighted on a trusty person to fetch your MS., I am unwilling to detain it longer from you, and therefore shall send my printer with it to-morrow morning to the Green Dragon, according to your directions; though I should not have ventured it in that manner, unless you yourself had warranted me. I do not know on what day the waggon sets out; but I have ordered the book to be left at Mr. Salmon's in Cambridge, till called for.

My Lady Orford ordered herself to be buried at Leghorn, the only place in Tuscany where Protestants have burial. Therefore I suppose she did not affect to change. On the contrary, I believe she had no preference for any *sect*, but rather laughed at all.

I know nothing new, neither in novelty nor antiquity. I have had no gout this winter, and therefore call it my leap-year. I am sorry it is not yours too. It is an age since I saw Dr. Lort. I hope illness is not the cause.

You will be diverted with hearing that I am chosen an honorary member of the new Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh. I accepted for two reasons. First, because it is a feather that does not demand my flying thither; and secondly, to show contempt for our own old fools. To me it will be a perfect sinecure, for I have moulted all my pen-feathers, and shall have no ambition of nestling into their printed transactions. Adieu, my good Sir.

Your much obliged,

H. Walpole.

2154. To the Rev. William Mason.

Berkeley Square, March 3, 1781.

I began to be a little out of humour at your silence; your letter came in time, just as I was going to seal up my lips too. An echo that will repeat one word twenty times will stop, unless you feed it anew, though but with a single word. This time, no more than the echo, had I any need to lift up my voice. The war is gone to sleep, the Parliament gone to bed, and Vestris himself, if he had any competitor, would go out of fashion. Invention, except of political lies, is not the gift of this age. For want of subject of admiration, Sir Joseph Yorke is called by the newspapers a great man, and for want of taste the Monthly Reviewers call Mr. Hayley a great poet, though he has no more ear or imagination than they have. As if anybody loved reading or did read, Mr. Gibbon has treated them with his vast two volumes. I have almost finished the last, and some parts are more entertaining than the other, and yet it has tired me, and so I think it did himself. There is no spirit in it, nor does any one chapter interest one more than another; which is commonly the case of compilations, especially in such an eloquent age as this. Though these volumes are not polished like the first, you see that he is never thinking of his subject, but intending to make his periods worthy of himself. Then he is often obscure, for from the prodigious quantity of matter he frequently is content with alluding to his original; and who for mercy would recur to Sozomen, Jornandez, and Procopius? Then having both the Eastern and Western empires on his hands at once, and nobody but *imbécilles* and their eunuchs at the head, one is confused with two subjects, that are quite alike, though quite distinct; and in the midst of this distraction enters a deluge of Alans, Huns, Goths, Ostrogoths, and Visigoths,

who with the same features and characters are to be described in different terms, without any essential variety, and he is to bring you acquainted with them when you wish them all at the bottom of the Red Sea. He has made me a present of these volumes, and I am sure I shall have fully paid for them when I have finished them: one paragraph I must select, which I believe the author did not intend should be so applicable to the present moment. 'The Armorican provinces of Gaul and the greatest part of Spain were thrown into a state of disorderly independence by the confederations of the Bagaudæ; and the imperial ministers pursued with proscriptive laws and ineffectual arms the rebels whom they had made.' End of chap. xxxv. This is also a sample of the style which is translating bad Latin into English, that may be turned into classic Latin. I was charmed, as I owned, with the enamel of the first volume, but I am tired by this rhetoric diction, and wish again for Bishop Burnet's *And so.*

They who write of their own times love or hate the actors, and draw you to their party; but with the fear of the *laws* of history before his eyes, a compiler affects you no more than a Chancery suit about the entail of an estate with whose owners you was not acquainted. Poor Lord Lyttelton was of all that tribe the most circumspect, and consequently the most insipid. His *Henry II* raises no more passions than Burn's[1] *Justice of Peace.* Apropos, '*poor Lyttelton*' were the words of offence. Mrs. Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any altercation, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure, that she

LETTER 2154.—[1] Richard Burn, D.C.L. (1709–1785), who published in 1755 *The Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer.*

would never ask him to dinner again. I took her side, and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtaroth scold in Coptic.

I am happy that you like Mr. Conway's speech, and the *Concio ad Clerum*[2]. The Duke of Grafton, with whom I dined the other day with Mr. Conway and Stonhewer, told us that the Flamen most offended is Bishop Keene. I do believe he is one of the most sore, for he is one of the most putrid; but he must be ten times more angry at his own son[3], who spoke on Monday *for* Burke's bill. Lord Chatham's second son[4], they say, was far more like *his* father. Sheridan demolished Courtenay, who, old George Cavendish said well, is deputy buffoon to Lord North.

I am sorry you have lost Palgrave, and wish you could tempt him to meet you at Strawberry Hill.

Sir Joshua, I doubt, will not have time soon to expedite your *Fresnoy*; it must be much altered, or I should marvel at Gray[5]; for Bishop Hurd you know I never admired him, even before he was mitred. All his writings are tame, without a grain of originality. I shall always maintain that you have made a masterly poem from a very moderate one, without adding to the author's sense. If that is not the perfection of translation, I do not know what is. I am very sensible that you could have added more gold, but who ever gilt so well? This I take to be the precise definition of a good translation, which improves base metal without adding ore. Adieu.

[2] Apparently some remarks addressed to the bishops in Conway's recently published speech.

[3] Benjamin Keene, M.P. for Cambridge.

[4] William Pitt the younger entered Parliament as member for Appleby in Jan. 1781. 'He made his first speech on 26 Feb. in support of Burke's bill for economical reform. The House expected much of Chatham's son, and was not disappointed. Perfectly at his ease, and in a voice full of melody and force, he set forth his opinions in well-ordered succession and in the best possible words.' (*D. N. B.*)

[5] Gray and Hurd tried to dissuade Mason from translating Fresnoy's poem.

2155. To the Rev. William Cole.

March 5, 1781.

You will have found by a letter that I thought you would receive yesterday, that I sent your MS., dear Sir, to the Green Dragon in Bishopsgate Street, and I shall be very glad to hear you have received it safe.

I do not in the least guess or imagine what you mean by Lord Hardwicke's publication of a *Walpoliana*[1]. Naturally it should mean a collection of sayings or anecdotes of my father, according to the French *Anas*, which began, I think, with those of Ménage. Or is it a collection of letters and state-papers during his administration? I own I am curious to know at least what this piece contains. I had not heard a word of it—and, were it not for the name, I should have very little inquisitiveness about it: for nothing upon earth ever was duller than the three heavy tomes his Lordship printed of Sir Dudley Carleton's Negotiations, and of what he called state-papers. Pray send me an answer as soon as you can, at least of as much as you have heard about this thing. I shall be obliged to you for a sight of the old wills you mention, but not just yet, as I should not have time to read them now, and might detain them too long.

Your MS. went to the Green Dragon on Friday night, and they said the waggon would set out the next day.

Yours ever,

H. W.

2156. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 9, 1781.

I have at last got for you Johnson's criticism on Gray. There is not the introductory Life, but this is all I have;

Letter 2155.—[1] *Walpoliana; or a few Anecdotes of Sir Robert Walpole*, edited by Lord Hardwicke, and privately printed in 1783.

and very oddly, Mr. Bentley sent it to me in manuscript, from indignation, as he is a true admirer of Gray; and he tells me that he received it from a correspondent at Oxford, who adds, that it is to appear in two months *to the making all Oxford too happy.* I send you this genuine expression, and I trust you will not forget the feature. You will find ample matter for satire and ridicule, besides the hints I have given you already from his other Lives. I depend on your asserting your indisputable right to succession, by vindicating your lawful predecessors.

To my great joy, I have done with the Goths and Huns and Visigoths. You will not read of them, but pray when you have an opportunity, turn to the very last page of the last volume, and to the very conclusion—it will be worth your while. I am now embarked in another almost as tedious a navigation, Mr. Warton's third volume. This is the third immense history of the life of poetry, and still poetry is not yet born, for Spenser will not appear till the fourth tome. I perceive it is the certain fate of an antiquary to become an old fool. Mr. Warton thinks Prior spoiled his original in his imitation of *Henry and Emma.* Mercy on us! what shall we come to in these halcyon days! *O for 'some gentle James,'* &c.[1]

Last week the stocks pricked up their ass's ears six inches higher. Austria and Russia were to make peace for us. France and Spain had accepted the Imperial mediations, and the *great* Sir Joseph[2] drew on his boots and was galloping over sea to Vienna. Sir Joseph's boots are still on, but France, they say, has said nothing, and Spain has said no, and we, I believe, protest against the independence of America, which we can very well afford, for we have funded only twenty-one millions to borrow twelve. For my part, I wish for peace, and I do not care how bad an

LETTER 2156.—[1] *Dunciad*, iv. 175-6. [2] Sir Joseph Yorke.

one: our glory is gone, our constitution gone, our sense gone, but I would save the lives that are left; and then Mr. Gibbon and the University of Oxford may hunt for and find what topics of panegyric they please. Adieu! I must send away my packet to Mr. S.[3] and desire him to find a conveyance for it.

2157. To Sir Horace Mann.

March 13, 1781.

I have just received your three lines of Feb. 28 by your courier, and hurry to reply, lest he should call for my answer before it is finished. I have indeed nothing to tell you that might not go through all the inquisitions and post offices in Europe; for I can only send you my own vague conjectures or opinions. The guns are going off for the conquest of St. Eustatia[1] by Rodney, which is just arrived. It may be a good circumstance towards disposing the Dutch to peace; and perhaps to balance what your dispatch brings, which is probably an attempt or design on Minorca. We imagine, too, that the grand fleet sailed yesterday *at last*, which is to relieve Gibraltar, and annihilate the combined squadrons.

Last week the stocks rose six per cent. in two days. It was given out that the Emperor and Empress had offered their mediation, and that all parties had accepted it, and that Sir Joseph Yorke was to depart on wings of winds to Vienna and conclude the peace. Much of this cargo of propitious news is fallen off, as well as the stocks. Sir Joseph is not gone; and at most it is said that their Imperial Majesties have made a defensive alliance, and that Russia had civilly told the Dutch that she could do

[3] Mr. Stonhewer.

Letter 2157.—[1] The island of St. Eustatius was taken by Rodney and Vaughan in Feb. 1781.

no more for them, but advised them to make peace. Now, would you know my own belief? It is, that, whatever advances are made to us, we shall profit of none, but persist in the American war; at least in such a submission as may leave us power to violate any treaty and begin again. Our foolhardiness is past all credibility; the nation is besotted, and not a great view is left *above* or below. If I filled my paper, I should but dilate on those two points. For my part, I do assure you, I cast all politics out of my thoughts. I see no glimmering of hope that we should be a great nation again; nor do we deserve to be. I wish for peace at any rate; and I cease to love my country, because I am disinterested, just as they do who sell it, because they are the reverse. I cannot love what deserves no esteem.

I have heard nothing of my worthy nephew since I wrote to you last. I can, and am glad I can, wean from my thoughts what offends them.

Private news we have none, but the silly topics of dancers and crowds. Nothing at all passes in the House of Lords, and not much in the other, but jobs. Their Highnesses of Cumberland have turned short from the King, and court the Prince of Wales, and the opposition, and the *ton*, and the mob. *My friends*[2] sit still, and sensibly let the hurricane powder which way it will. *It* will soon, I suppose, produce confusion and new quarrels; but you know me too well to imagine that I will embark, even in speculation, on chapters to come. When I doubt almost all I hear in the present moment, I shall not roam into guesses on future events, which I probably shall not know whether they happen or not. Adieu! I must seal my letter to have it ready. It is not very informing, but at least it tells you that everything is in suspense.

[2] The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. *Walpole.*

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again to tell you that I have received yours of the 24th, in which you say I forgot that you knew Mr. Conway. You, in your turn, forget that I knew Richcourt. The late Countess's veracity was certainly very defective. Most certainly she had and did receive a jointure of 2,500*l.* a year from our family. When I had the management of her son's affairs, I could have raised it to near 4,000*l.* a year, and offered it; but she or Sharpe would not allow me—but I will say no more on that subject; her will shows what a trumpery understanding she had.

2158. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Dear Sir, Berkeley Square, March 13, 1781.

Your son has just sent me the Prince of Beauvau's letter to you, but it by no means satisfies me. He talks of sending you *only* two more folios of transcribed letters: but what I want is, *the volume of portraits and characters written by my dear friend herself, and another of miscellaneous verses, songs, epigrams, &c.* The former are what she particularly wished me to have: and I beg you will look whether they are amongst what he has already sent you; and, if not, I beg you will tell him, when you see him, that it is those I am most anxious about. He cannot well deny having them, for they are what he first begged to retain, and then, when I refused, what he desired me to print for him, which I also refused.

I am very sorry you do not mention your own return. I am perfectly easy about whatever is in your hands. For the *brochures* and indifferent things, you will have an opportunity of sending them. Lord Lucan set out this

Letter 2158.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 45–7.

morning for Paris to see his son who has the measles there, and would take charge of them: but, if you should have the portraits, &c., I should not venture to trust them to an Irish head.

I have desired Lord Lucan to inquire of Le Duc, the tailor, whether he has not several suits of clothes (I know he has) belonging to the late Mr. Beauclerc, and which he left to his servant. Wiart, if anybody, could get them, and would keep them, till the poor man could get them over, which he will soon have an opportunity of doing. Will you permit your own servant to speak to Wiart on that subject? But I do not suppose they will be recovered. When a French will is so ill observed, can you expect that a tailor, though a great prince too, should respect an English one?

The Park and Tower guns have been firing to-day for the conquest of St. Eustatia. They were almost ready to go off last week for a peace that the Emperor and Czarina were to get for us. But I conclude your son tells you all our news, and I should only repeat him. I wish very much to see you. I hope you will not stay till the peace is made.

Your much obliged and very humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2159. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Berkeley Square, March 25, 1781.

DR. WARNER[1], who is going to Aix to conduct home the Dowager Carlisle, will bring you this, dear Sir.

I have received a letter from the Duc de Guines recom-

LETTER 2159.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 48–51.

[1] Rev. John Warner (1736–1800), Rector of Stourton in Wiltshire. He was an intimate friend of George Selwyn. Many of his letters are printed in Jesse's *George Selwyn and his Contemporaries*.

mending to me an Italian Abbé, in which he tells me (and I do not know how he came to do so, as we have had no correspondence) that Madame du Deffand left me only such papers as were specified in an inventory, and that there remain a great many, not inserted there, and perhaps not the least precious, which he laments not coming to me. I do not know whether this is a fact, or a mistake arising from what the Marquis d'Aulan disputed at first and then gave up; or to sound me by *somebody's* desire, or in consequence of having heard anything of the treatment I have received. I have answered very guardedly, told him the heads of my story without complaint, and concluded by saying that, having had no pretensions to anything, I certainly can claim nothing but what was left to me.

I should be much obliged to you, however, if you could indirectly inform yourself whether this relation is well founded. You may, if you please, mention it to the Duc de Guines himself, and say how much I am obliged to him for the information and for the part he takes in what relates to me. This may lead to his telling you more. I certainly do not mean to ask for anything to which I have not the most strict right. I wish I could get that—though indeed I have never expected to get a scrap of paper that is worth reading! I have hitherto forborne complaining, because I dread the suspicion of having wished to have anything left to me. But, having gone so far as to make my dear old friend very angry with me by positive refusals of everything, they, who defraud me, will not act very honourably if they deprive me of a parcel of manuscripts.

Though I write securely, I can tell you nothing but general topics. The nation is more besotted, and the ministers more popular than ever. Were it only that the opposition is more unpopular, I should not wonder nor think people so much to blame. The enormous jobs given

in the loan have made a little noise: indeed so much, that the court has taken pains to spread reports of invasion to lower the premiums, and have succeeded. Perhaps they believe these reports, for troops are dispatched to all the important ports on the coast, and last night the grand fleet was said to be recalled. It is positively said too that the negotiations of peace are broken off, which I expected, though not so soon.

General Conway is gone to Jersey with strong additional force, which he obtained only by dint of perseverance.

If you stay much longer, I believe you will find new *embarras* from a new quarter. The youngest uncle[2] has got possession of the eldest nephew[3], and sets the father[4] at defiance. A moppet[5] in Grosvenor Square has conceived hopes from this rising storm which are about as well founded as any of his pretensions have ever been. This is a slight sketch which you will be able to detail in your own mind, as no material change has happened anywhere.

If Dr. Warner returns from Aix, where he will stay very little, before you set out for England, you may write safely to me by him, and send me any of the papers, if you should receive them, and the *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, and the tomes of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, both of which Wiart has for me, and for which I will beg you to pay him.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

2160. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square, March 29, 1781.

You are so good-natured that I am sure you will be glad to be told that the report of Mr. Pennant being disordered is not true. He is come to town, has been with me, and at

[2] The Duke of Cumberland.
[3] The Prince of Wales.
[4] The King.
[5] The Marquis of Rockingham.

least is as composed as ever I saw him. He is going to publish another part of his *Welsh Tour*, which he can well afford, though I believe he does not lose by his works. An aunt is dead exceedingly rich, who had given some thousands to him and his daughter—but suddenly changed her mind and left all to his sister, who has most nobly given him all that had been destined in the cancelled will.

Dr. Nash[1] has just published the first volume of his *Worcestershire*. It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough—but then it is finely dressed, and has many heads and views.

Dr. Lort was with me yesterday, and I never saw him better, nor has he been much out of order. I hope your gout has left you—but here are winds bitter enough to give one anything.

Yours ever,
H. W.

2161. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1781.

I wrote a letter to you for your messenger the moment he arrived, but he was detained here so long that it must have reached you antiquated. He found us exulting for the capture of St. Eustatia: the scene is a little changed since, both in West and East. America is once more not quite ready to be conquered, though every now and then we fancy it is. Tarleton is defeated[1], Lord Cornwallis is checked, and Arnold not sure of having betrayed his friends to much purpose. If we are less certain of recovering what we have thrown away, we are in full as much danger of losing what we acquired, not more creditably, at the other

Letter 2160.—[1] Treadway Russell Nash, D.D. (1725–1811), the historian of Worcestershire.

Letter 2161.—[1] General Morgan defeated Tarleton on Jan. 17, 1781, at Cowpens in South Carolina.

end of the world. Hyder Ally, an Indian potentate, thinking he has as much right to the diamonds of his own country as the Rumbolds and Sykes's, who were originally waiters in a tavern, has given us a blow, and has not done [2].

Europe has a mass of debts to pay to the other quarters of the globe; which, on the merit of having improved navigation and invented gunpowder, we have thought we had a right to desolate and plunder; and we have been such savages as to punish each other for our crimes. The Romans havocked the world for glory; the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, for gold; but each nation thirsted to engross the whole mass, and became scourges to each other. Attila and Hyder Ally are at least as innocent as Julius Cæsar and Lord Clive.

Our fleet is gone to rescue Gibraltar. The French fleet has not yet moved; but the next month will probably be an important one. The negotiations for peace seem to have stopped in their birth, and probably will depend on the events of that month. The Dutch reply to our manifesto will not raise our credit, as it gives us the lie pretty flatly on our assertion of their having attempted to make us no satisfaction on our complaints of the conduct of Amsterdam. Methinks it were better to be a little accurate, as there are more readers in Europe than our country gentlemen.

I am sorry when I cannot admire all our proceedings; but politics will not always stand the test of cool survey. Indeed, it is not fair to decide on parts, especially in the heat of events. The wisdom of measures must depend on the prudence, goodness, and object of the system, together

[2] Hyder Ali invaded the Carnatic in the summer of 1780. He defeated and put to flight the Company's forces, and took Arcot. In the following January Sir Eyre Coote took command, and defeated Hyder in the battle of Porto Novo (July 1, 1781).

with a just calculation of the probability of events, and a comparison of the value of the advantage of success with the danger and detriment of miscarriage. I am far from allowing that even wise measures, with all the profit of success, are good; for then fortunate conquerors would be excusable, which I shall never think: but I doubt we are not likely to have that dazzling consolation; nor have I knowledge or penetration enough to discover the beauty of the system that threw us into the American war, and still prefers war with France, Spain, and Holland, to the confession of our mistake.

I have seen Lord Orford's lawyer again, and find I guessed rightly, when I concluded that the caveat he entered against his mother's will would produce the litigation he protested against. Lucas owned he would contest the money in Mr. Hoare's hands, his Lordship, he said, having claims on his mother for more than that sum. You see I knew the gentry. Lucas wanted to persuade me to write to you on something they wish to get from Cav. Mozzi, but I refused to meddle. I will have no hand in their jobs. Last night, according to his annual custom, and the only notice he ever takes of me, I received from his Lordship a box of plover's eggs—it is just like a peppercorn for quit-rent. I never condescend to return my humble thanks for so sumptuous a present, which I suppose the crew deem very ungrateful. Pray do not grieve for having been most innocently accessory to the affront I received. You did what was perfectly right in sending the notice to me—and could not calculate the height of the impertinence of his Lordship's ministers. In truth, they have furnished me with a just excuse, had I wanted it, for never concerning myself with his affairs again. Adieu! my dear Sir.

P.S. I am impatient for the history of the Medici.

2162. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 30, 1781.

You flatten our correspondence so much by never answering my letters, that I have not spirit to keep it up: it would look as if I delighted in writing. You have not even told me that you received the MS. of Gray's Life; surely that did not leave you totally without matter for a line! The country I allow does not furnish topics like the capital, and yet unless I wrote of Vestris and the follies of fashion, what else makes sensation here? The departure of the fleet that leaves us as exposed as we were before the conquest to Danes and Saxons, makes none: a much more distant revolution than might happen here does make impression, or I should still not write. Adieu the golden sands of the Ganges (all the waters of which would not wash away our corruptions)! adieu the diamonds of Bengal! Rumbold is the last waiter at White's whose babe will be rocked in a cradle of gems; and Sykes the last footman who will be created a baronet for being worth some lacs of rupees! The Nabob of Arcot will have no more members of Parliament for retainers, Lord Sandwich will carry no more gold muslins 'cross the Park, and should Lord North want another loan of twelve millions to enrich Mr. Drummond and his clerks and livery servants[1], he must not reckon on the Indian Company. Hyder Ali has dispersed all our visions of endless wealth; Lord Clive usurped, Lord Pigot died; and Paul Benfield has been a rascal, and has returned under the sanction of Parliament and of his Grace

Letter 2162.—[1] 'March 26, 1781. Sir George Saville moved for an inquiry into Lord North's behaviour on the Loan. Mr. Byng produced numberless instances of his partiality in that affair. Drummond, the banker, had 84,000*l.* in his own name, and treble in those of his clerks.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 455.)

Frederick North, Lord North
(afterwards 2nd Earl of Guilford)
from a drawing by Nathaniel Dance, R.A.

of York to be one again in vain! yes, India and America are alike escaping out of the talons of the Scotch. Cargoes of bad news arrived on Tuesday from East and West. Tarleton is beaten, and the twenty thousand pounds that purchased Arnold's treachery are likely to have been bestowed to no purpose. Another disgrace is that the Dutch manifesto convicts us of a notorious and gross lie, that of affirming that they refused an answer to our complaint of Van Berchel[2]; that lie we endeavoured to support by hinting to the Amsterdammers in all the court newspapers, that they would do *well* to tear him and the magistrates piecemeal.

Having passed the bounds of all shame, we have returned the forbearance of the French at the Grenades to our proprietors, by the contrary practice at St. Eustatia[3]; Lord George Germaine, however, out of modesty or pride has refused to avow this scandalous proceeding under his hand, in his answer to our merchants, who have remonstrated against it.

Your cloth, who will not be behindhand in any effrontery, take occasion to distinguish their zeal. Bishop *Proteus*[4] of Chester affirms the Roman Catholics decrease—an excellent reason for flinging indulgences at their heads, to invite them back. Dr. Bagot[5] has published the silliest, emptiest, of all pretty pamphlets against a Dr. Bell[6], who has written on the Sacrament, and the whole purpose of the former is to have an opportunity of calling Bishop Hoadley, Socinian.

[2] The Pensionary who had taken an active part in the intercepted treaty with the United States.

[3] Rodney captured an immense booty at St. Eustatius, of which a great part was the property of English merchants who had grown rich by supplying contraband of war to the Americans. Rodney confiscated and sold this property, and became in consequence involved in a number of lawsuits with those merchants who claimed to be British subjects.

[4] Beilby Porteus (1731–1809), Bishop of Chester, 1776–87; Bishop of London, 1787–1809.

[5] Lewis Bagot (1740–1802), Dean of Christ Church, and successively Bishop of Bristol, Norwich, and St. Asaph.

[6] William Bell, D.D. (1731–1816), Chaplain to the Princess Amelia and Rector of Christ Church, London.

I am glad the monk Bagot and the atheist Hume meet cordially in abuse on the excellent Bishop. Tucker has published his attack on Locke. In short, we shall not stop till all virtue and all sense, as well as all Europe, are our enemies; I am sick of writing on such themes, and since you do not answer me, this letter is long enough.

2163. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, April 1, 1781.

Your letter and mine crossed each other. As you have made *amende honorable* for your indolence, it is but equitable on my side to absolve you. Nay, you merit more by the promise you make me, and like a fond mother that taps a favourite, I am ready to shower sugar-plums on you to cure the slap that did not hurt you. Seriously, the mock heroic would be the highest completion of my wishes; it is what I have always recommended to you, not only as best suited to your genius, but as uniting those two distant talents, both which you eminently possess,—harmonious poetry and wit. Pray let Dr. Johnson feel that a *Dispensary* can make itself be read, and I will answer that it will continue to be so. The quarrel with Ashtaroth[1], I believe, has gone no farther, and will not furnish above an episode; but I have sent you materials enough, I am sure, of late, to stock you with congenial topics, unless a system to recall the monkish ages can fail being a magazine. In the meantime your *Garden* shall be welcome, though, like his Majesty's herb-woman, I hope it will only strew flowers before the grand procession.

If you will not read the Constantinopolitan historian, you will at least not disdain to turn to a particular passage or two: look at page 46 of vol. ii on the reduction of the

Letter 2163.—[1] Mrs. Montagu.

legions, beginning at the words, 'The *same timid policy.*' Lord John[2] says he is persuaded that Gibbon had thrown in that and such sentences and sentiments when he was paying court to Charles Fox, and forgot to correct them after his change.

You are very good in condescending to make an apology for mentioning your deputies. It would become me rather to ask your pardon for differing with you on any part of that business. My discordance was founded on the unhappy knowledge I have of my countrymen, who, I was sure, as it proved, would be glad to seize any opportunity of division to withdraw from their engagements. Mr. W.'s[3] success had inspired him with too much confidence. Whoever will govern must submit to be governed—I mean that one must yield in many points to carry the principal. But I will say no more on that head, since the moment has been lost; yet I do not envy those who are delivered from domestic alarms. The complaisance of the Parliament does but insure ruin; every vote that is carried plunges us deeper, and had the American or Spanish or Dutch war been resisted, it had been happy for England. Falsehood demanded every vote, and gold procured every one. The mines will fail, and then truth will emerge, though much too late. As to Mr. Gilpin, Lord Harcourt's plan and mine was that he should execute the prints himself, which we thought would be easy, if he could learn the aquatinta, which seems an easy and expeditious method, for one that can draw so well. As to encouragement, we do not flatter ourselves that we have interest, and I am sure there is no advising anybody to risk expense at present; extravagance itself begins to calculate.

As this is only a postscript to my last, it is long enough.

[2] Lord John Cavendish.
[3] Mr. Wyvill, Chairman of the Yorkshire Association.

I shall carry it to town to-morrow, and add anything that I hear before Tuesday evening. Last night's *Gazette* has endeavoured to wipe out Tarleton's defeat by some meagre advantages since, and the bells here have rung for them, for all chimes are retained in the pay of the government, and perhaps the insurrection at Amsterdam went into the tune, though I know that even the great Sir Joseph Yorke, as the newspapers call him, did not believe it on Friday night, and there is no mail come since.

Tuesday evening.

I may seal my letter, for I have nothing to add.

2164. To the Rev. William Cole.

April 3, 1781.

I am very sorry, dear Sir, that, in my last letter but one, I took no notice of what you said about Lord Hardwicke. The truth was, I am perfectly indifferent about what he prints or publishes. There is generally a little indirect malice, but so much more dullness, that the latter soon suffocates the former. This is telling you that I could not be offended at anything you said of him—nor am I likely to suspect a sincere friend of having the smallest intention of disobliging me. You have proved the direct contrary for above forty years. I have not time to say more, but am

Ever most truly yours,

H. Walpole.

P.S. I am very sorry you have been indisposed again.

2165. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 14, 1781.

As all our politics are at sea, I have none to send you, for the only land-topic of that class I am in the dark about,

I mean the Chancellor's mumbling of Lord Sandwich and Lord Bathurst; for though tithes were the occasion, they certainly were not the cause: some quarrel there is supposed to be in the Cabinet, I know not what nor care.

Your Primate [1] on Sunday was se'nnight, preached a sermon at the royal chapel, that sounded as sour, and probably had much the same foundation as the Chancellor's discontent. The shaft seemed to be aimed at his quondam pupil [2], as it reproved unbounded indulgence of the passions, and satirized the ambition of being an expert charioteer; then daring higher, his Grace condemned the waste of the lives of subjects from the obstinate pursuit of empty titles of sovereignty. *Diable, où en sommes-nous?*

Dean Milles is going to revive Rowley, yet so as by laudanum. Mr. Bryant, too, is a convert: I asked him t'other night at Lord Dacre's if he could seriously believe that Rowley was the author of what Chatterton ascribed to him. He said, 'Oh, no, he was persuaded those poems were much *older* than Rowley.' I smiled, and begged he would not take it ill, if I told him what happened to me a few years ago: Governor Pownall had tired me to death with reading a dissertation on the ruins of a building in Ireland, which he maintained were the remains of a temple built by the Danes on the foundation of a much older edifice raised by some nation who lived so long ago that nobody knows who they were,—I did not dare to add, that I suppose they were the Ammonians.

Sir Joshua Reynolds has lent me Dr. Johnson's Life of Pope, which Sir Joshua holds to be a *chef-d'œuvre*. It is a most trumpery performance, and stuffed with all his crabbed phrases and vulgarisms, and much trash as anecdotes; you shall judge yourself. He says that all he can

LETTER 2165.—[1] Markham, Archbishop of York.
[2] The Prince of Wales.

discover of Pope's correspondent, Mr. Cromwell[3], is that he used to hunt in a tie-wig. The *Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady*, he says, 'signifies the amorous fury of a raving girl'; and yet he admires the subject of *Eloïsa's Epistle to Abelard*. The machinery in *The Rape of the Lock*, he calls 'combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty,' in English I guess a 'lucky thought': publishing proposals is turned into 'emitting' them. But the 66th page is still more curious: it contains a philosophic solution of Pope's not transcribing the whole *Iliad* as soon as he thought he should, and it concludes with this piece of bombast nonsense, 'he that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.' Pope's house here he calls 'the house to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration,' and that 'his vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage'; and that, 'of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety.' Was poor good sense ever so unmercifully overlaid by a babbling old woman? How was it possible to marshal words so ridiculously? He seems to have read the ancients with no view but of pilfering polysyllables, utterly insensible to the graces of their simplicity, and these are called standards of biography! I forgot, he calls Lord Hervey's challenging Pulteney, 'summoning him to a duel.' Hurlothrumbo talked plain English in comparison of this wight on stilts, but I doubt I have wearied you,—send me something to put my mouth in taste.

[3] Henry Cromwell, a man about town, with whom Pope corresponded between 1707 and 1711.

2166. To John Henderson[1].

Berkeley Square, April 16, 1781.

Ever since I had the pleasure of seeing you here, I have been uneasy at what you told me, of having seen an extract of my tragedy in a work going to be published. Though I was so imprudent as to print and give away some copies of it; and, consequently, exposed myself to the risk of what is happening, yet I heartily wish I could prevent that publication, as it will occasion discourse about the play, which is disgusting from the subject, and absurd from being totally unfit for the stage—a reason which, could I have succeeded better, ought still to have restrained me from undertaking it.

May I take the liberty of asking you, if you think it could be stopped? I should be willing to pay for my folly: do not answer me by a compliment, nor tell me, as civility may perhaps dictate, that it would be pity to deprive the public of such a *jewel*. Pray do not think that I seek for, or should like, such an hyperbole. I use the word *jewel* most ironically, and do not imagine that a pebble with a great flaw through the whole can have much lustre. There is no affectation in this request. I have betrayed but too much vanity in printing what I knew had such capital faults; but I am too old now not to fear disgusting the public more than I can flatter myself with its approbation. Yet the impression of only a small number of copies at first will prove that, when several years younger, I was conscious of the imperfections of my tragedy, and gave them only to those who I knew were partial to me. There are many defects in the execution as well as in the subject; but when the materials are ill chosen, what would it avail

Letter 2166.—[1] The actor.

to retouch the fashion? Nor though I have sometimes written verses, did I ever think that I was born a poet.

In short, Sir, I most sincerely wish to have the publication of any part of the play prevented, and you will oblige me exceedingly if you can assist me. Perhaps it is asking too great a favour, when I beg you to take that trouble; if it is, only let me know the editor, and I will undertake the task myself.

I am, Sir, with great regard,
Your obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2167. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 25, 1781.

THOUGH the list of Lent preachers may contradict me ever so flatly, the fact was not a jot less true[1]. I heard it three hours after the delivery of the sermon, from one that was present, and several times since. Nay, it gave so much offence to the *charioteer*[2] (who was also, nobody knows why, called a *gladiator*) that he swore, 'D—n the scoundrel, I will never forgive him!' The insult surprised even in London, hardened as we are to inconsistency. I know no more about it; but that the sermon was understood as a satire, there is no doubt, nor that it was so taken by the object of it. That the *intention* may be denied is very likely, for what will not a bishop say or unsay? For instance, my Lord of Oxford[3] dining lately at Lambeth, declaimed against Dr. Bell for supporting Hoadley's doctrine on the Sacrament. Another divine there present told me,

LETTER 2167.—[1] Mason, who as a former Chaplain-in-Ordinary was versed in the etiquette of Lent preaching, doubted whether Markham had actually preached on the occasion mentioned in Walpole's letter of April 14.

[2] The Prince of Wales.

[3] Butler, Bishop of Oxford.

that he actually has in print an anonymous pamphlet written formerly by *Butler himself* against Warburton for censuring Hoadley on that occasion, but is there a yard of lawn in England more dirty than Butler's? If I meet with Tucker's book, I will, to oblige you, read the last sentence, but I certainly will not buy it, nor will pay for following their clergy through every kennel. In truth I have a mind to save my money and my eyes, and read no more.

We are in a state of reprobation, and have no more sense left than principles. It is but just now that I have waded through three thousand lines of a poem called *Burlesque*, which diverted me as much as a dose of diacodium would do; in short, I will swear, as good royalists did in the civil war, to let my beard grow till you write. I had rather play at push-pin than read, only to unlearn all my ideas, and be told that King William and Marlborough were no heroes, Russell and Sydney no patriots, Locke and Hoadley no reasoners, Milton, Prior, Garth, and Gray no poets; which leaves vacancies for Lord Mansfield and Lord George Germaine to slip into the seats of courage, Wedderburn and Hillsborough into those of patriotism, D. Hume and Johnson into those of solid argument, and all the bellmen of Oxford into those of poetry. As to Lord Chatham, the victories, conquests, extension of our empire within these last five years, will annihilate his fame of course, and he may be replaced by Starvation Dundas[4], whose pious policy suggested that the devil of *rebellion could be expelled only by fasting*, though that never drove him out of Scotland. Unfortunately, Dr. Franklin was a truer politician, when he said he would furnish Mr. Gibbon with materials for writing

[4] Henry Dundas (1742-1811), afterwards Viscount Melville (impeached in 1805), M.P. for Midlothian, son of Robert Dundas of Arniston, President of the Court of Session. He was at this time Lord Advocate. According to Horace Walpole (*Last Journals*, vol. i. p. 468, note), Dundas coined the word 'starvation' (which became his nickname) in a speech on American affairs made in 1775.

the History of the Decline of the British Empire, but I doubt he will not pen the character of Hyder Alli with so much complacency as that of Attila.

I have no news for you, as you may perceive by my rehashing these old grievances, but when chaos is come again, what would signify a courier from Paradise? It adds to my vexation that you cannot or will not come. Well, I will forget all the world, and though I will learn no creed or jargon of the day, I will find out some pastime that shall not have a grain of sense in it, and yet have much more meaning than anything in fashion, which will be no difficult task.

Raspe's book is finished, and will be published next week. I do not ask for a letter, but a line to direct me how to send it to you.

A few words more, and I have done for the present. I shall be chagrined to the last degree if I do not see you here this summer, as you promised. I have many things to say to you that I cannot write, and I do not like to delay. I am grown lamentably old; and though my health is much better than last year, the mental part is far from being in the same order. I perceive decays in it every day, and I dread their increasing till I do not perceive them. This makes me withdraw a good deal from the world, and without any struggle; but I could wish to see more of the few friends I have left, and consequently the one I most admire. It is a sad invitation to tell you that I totter, but I am petitioning your heart, and not your fancy, and know I apply to the right office. Oh, but there is or may be an obstacle that I do fear: Lord Harcourt is to go to Harrowgate, and that journey may detain you in the north! Well! pleasures are not the portion of age! I love you both too well to wish to separate you; and I will be content with your mutual satisfaction if it clashes with mine.

Thursday, 26th.

I have found a parcel of Raspe's books on my table; you shall have one the moment you draw for it.

There is nothing new, for I do not reckon the rhodomontades of the *Gazette* on Rodney and Arbuthnot novelties: they have not even raised the stocks a fraction.

2168. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, April 27, 1781.

Perhaps you may think I am fallen into a lethargy; but it is only the war that is so. At least, though the ocean is covered with navies, they do nothing but walk about in their sleep,—unless you know to the contrary; for you are nearer to the scene of action, if there is any, than we are. The Spanish fleet is said to be retired to Cadiz, and to have civilly left the path to Gibraltar open, which would be very civil. In short, I can tell you nothing but hearsay, or what people say without having heard. It is a month since I wrote to you, and yet nothing has happened but an extraordinary *Gazette* or two, which brags, like a bridegroom of threescore, of having forced two little fortresses that begged to be ravished, and of Arbuthnot having balked an inferior squadron. Methinks we western powers should make peace, and not expose ourselves to the Vandals of the north, who overrun kingdoms in fewer weeks than it costs us years to take an island no bigger than half a crown.

The Parliament has quite left off business, though it has not shut up shop. In short, I hope your nephew writes to you, for I can find nothing to say; and where he does, is past my comprehension. If I trusted to my imagination, I should not wonder at its being worn out; but, as I have always piqued myself upon telling nothing but facts that at least I believe true, my eyes and ears are not gone;

and, if there was an event no bigger than a grain of millet, I could easily know it; for those drag-nets, our newspapers, let nothing escape them, from whales to the most insignificant fry. But four days ago, the *Public Advertiser* informed the town that I have a field that wants draining at Strawberry Hill, which no doubt is very important intelligence! Antiquaries used to be ridiculous for recovering trifles from the havoc of time: now we have daily writers that sift the kennels, and save every straw that would be swallowed in the common sewer. Then think what thousands of loiterers we must have, who can buy and read such rubbish, in the midst of a civil war, and wars with three great nations! How contemptible we are! and, to our shame, these journals of our trifling are circulated all over Europe! Don't you blush when you read them? And do you wonder that I have nothing to say? I have always reckoned my own letters very trifling and superficial; but two misses that correspond would be ashamed of communicating such foolish paragraphs as compose the daily lectures of the metropolis: and yet it is well when they are only foolish—more commonly they are brutal or scandalous.

Well! I have been writing about nothing, and may as well finish. You see my silence is owing to no want of good will.

2169. To Henry William Bunbury.

Berkeley Square, April 28, 1781.

I am just come, Sir, from the Royal Academy, where I had been immediately struck, as I always am by your works, by a most capital drawing of Richmond Hill; but what was my surprise and pleasure—for I fear the latter preceded my modesty—when I found your note, and read that so very fine a performance was destined for me! This is a true

picture of my emotions, Sir, but I hope you will believe that I am not less sincere when I assure you that the first moment's reflection told me how infinitely, Sir, you think of overpaying me for the poor though just tribute of my praise in a trifling work[1], whose chief merit is its having avoided flattery. Your genius, Sir, cannot want *that*, and, still less, my attestation; but when you condescend to reward *this*, I doubt I shall be a little vain, for when I shall have such a certificate to produce, how will it be possible to remain quite humble? I must beg you, Sir, to accept my warmest and most grateful thanks, which are doubled by your ingenious delicacy in delivering me, in this very agreeable manner, from the pain I felt in fearing that I had taken too much liberty with you.

I am, &c.,

Hor. Walpole.

2170. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

April 30, 1781.

I cannot express, dear Sir, how my heart bleeds at what you said in your last[1]. But I will not say anything on that subject now, as I shall refer myself to your son when you see him. He is indeed one of the most meritorious and amiable young men in the world. I wish the great affection I have for him could be of any value to him!

He delivered me the *Voyage pittoresque*, the dear little dog of my poor friend, and a box of papers; but I was surprised at not finding one miscellaneous volume, and more particularly the volume of portraits and characters, which I

Letter 2169.—[1] Horace Walpole spoke of Bunbury in the Advertisement to the fourth volume of *Anecdotes of Painting* as 'the second Hogarth, and first imitator who ever fully equalled his original.'

Letter 2170.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 51–3.

[1] Relative to his lawsuit.

should think might easily have been copied before now. I beg you will make my compliments to the Prince of Beauvau, and acknowledge the rest, but say that I am anxious to have the two others, as it was what my dear friend particularly recommended to me often and often, and that I hope he will have it finished as soon as he can, that I may have it in my possession.

I begged your son to mention to you a little volume of the works of the Chevalier de Boufflers, lately printed, which Madame de Cambis has sent a copy of to the Duke of Richmond. If it is to be bought, I should be glad to have one.

There is nothing at all new here of any sort. Whatever I hear before he sets out, you shall hear by him.

I am, with far more earnestness than what is said for the conclusion of a letter, and with the sincere friendship that I have long professed for you,

Yours most affectionately,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2171. To the Rev. William Cole.

Berkeley Square [May 4], 1781[1].

I shall not only be ready to show Strawberry Hill, at any time he chooses, to Dr. Farmer, as your friend, but to be honoured with his acquaintance, though I am very shy now of contracting new. I have great respect for his character and abilities and judicious taste; and am very clear that he has elucidated Shakespeare in a more reasonable and satisfactory manner than any of his affected commentators, who only complimented him with learning that he had not, in order to display their own. Pray give me timely notice whenever I am likely to see Dr. Farmer, that I may

LETTER 2171.—[1] Cole's copy of this letter is dated 'April [May 4] 1781.'

not be out of the way when I can have an opportunity of showing attention to a friend of yours, and pay a small part of your gratitude to him. There shall be a bed at his service; for you know Strawberry cannot be seen in a moment, nor are Englishmen so *liants* as to get acquainted in the time they are walking through a house.

But now, my good Sir, how could you suffer your prejudiced partiality to me to run away with you so extravagantly, as to call me one of the greatest characters of the age? You are too honest to flatter, too much a hermit to be interested, and I am too powerless and insignificant to be an object of court, were you capable of paying it from mercenary views. I know then it could proceed from nothing but the warmth of your heart. But if you are blind towards me, I am not so to myself. I know not how others feel on such occasions, but if any one happens to praise me, all my faults gush into my face, and make me turn my eyes inward and outward with horror. What am I but a poor old skeleton, tottering towards the grave, and conscious of ten thousand weaknesses, follies, and worse! And for talents, what are mine, but trifling and superficial; and, compared with those of men of real genius, most diminutive! Mine a great character! Mercy on me! I am a composition of Anthony Wood and Madame Danois[2], and I know not what trumpery writers. This is the least I can say to refute your panegyric, which I shall burn presently; for I will not have such an encomiastic letter found in my possession, lest I should seem to have been pleased with it. I enjoin you, as a penance, not to contradict one tittle I have said here; for I am not begging more compliments, and shall take it seriously ill if you ever pay me another. We have been friends above forty years; I am satisfied of your sincerity and affection—but does it become us, at past threescore each, to be saying

[2] The Comtesse d'Aulnoy, authoress of travels and fairy tales.

fine things to one another? Consider how soon we shall both be nothing!

I assure you, with great truth, I am at this present very sick of my little vapour of fame. My tragedy has wandered into the hands of some banditti booksellers, and I am forced to publish it myself to prevent piracy. All I can do is to condemn it myself, and that I shall.

I am reading Mr. Pennant's new *Welsh Tour*; he has pleased me by making very handsome mention of you—but I will not do what I have been blaming.

My poor dear Madame du Deffand's little dog is arrived. She made me promise to take care of it the last time I saw her, should I survive her. That I will most religiously, and make it as happy as it is possible.

I have not much curiosity to see your Cambridge Raphael, but great desire to see you, and will certainly this summer accept your invitation, which I take much kinder than your great character—though both flowed from the same friendship. Mine for you is exactly what it has been ever since you knew (and few men can boast so uninterrupted a friendship as yours and that of)

HOR. WALPOLE.

2172. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1781.

I HAVE given Mr. Stonhewer Raspe's book for you. I suppose it will set you on inventing twenty arts that were known five or six hundred years ago; but I do not believe you will find a celestinette there, which was quite your own. There is a picture at the Exhibition in which Stubbs[1] has invented enamelling oil paintings, and it looks as if he would succeed—not that our painters will adopt it.

LETTER 2172.—[1] George Stubbs (1724–1806), animal painter.

They are as obstinate as mules or farmers. Would they deign to employ the encaustic that Munt[2] revived in this house?

The Exhibition is much inferior to last year's; nobody shines there but Sir Joshua and Gainsborough. The head of the former's Dido is very fine: I do not admire the rest of the piece. His Lord Richard Cavendish[3] is bold and stronger than he ever coloured. The picture of my three nieces is charming. Gainsborough has two pieces with land and sea, so free and natural, that one steps back for fear of being splashed. The back front of the Academy is handsome, but like the other to the street, the members are so heavy, that one cannot stand back enough to see it in any proportion, unless in a barge moored in the middle of the Thames.

Darby has relieved Gibraltar: the Spanish fleet ran into their burrows, as if Lord Chatham were still alive. I shall not be surprised if the King of Spain signs a separate peace. What can France say for abandoning him thus? They miss such gross opportunities, that I cannot but think their ministers take pensions like our members of Parliament.

There are published two more volumes of Harris of Salisbury—paltry things indeed! He dwells on Aristotle's old hacked rules for the drama, and the pedantry of a beginning, middle, and end. Harris was one of those wiseacres whom such wiseacres as himself cried up for profound; but he was more like the scum at the top of a well.

When I was talking of the Academy, I should have told you that Baretti has printed a catalogue of its ornaments and plaster casts. He takes occasion to inveigh against Brutus for taking off Cæsar; and this Italian slave will be approved by more than Cæsar.

Do you know that I am in great distress? My *Mysterious*

[2] Müntz, Walpole's former *protégé*.
[3] Second son of fourth Duke of Devonshire; d. 1781.

Mother has wandered into the hands of booksellers, and has been advertised with my name without my knowledge. Like a legislator I have held out both rewards and punishments to prevent its appearance, but at last have been forced to advertise it myself; but unless the spurious edition appears, I shall keep it back till everybody is gone out of town, and then it will be forgotten by the winter. I intend, too, to abuse it myself in a short advertisement prefixed. It is hard that when one submits to be superannuated, it is not permitted. At first I had a mind to add your magic alterations, which in the compass of ten lines makes it excusable; but then I thought it would look like wishing to have it brought on the stage as it might be. If I do publish it, I shall like with your leave to print your alterations hereafter, for I think them, as I said, performed by a *coup de baguette*, and that nothing is a greater proof of your superiority. Pray send me another copy, for in moving from Arlington Street to Berkeley Square I mislaid them, and cannot find them directly, though I saw them but last year, and have treasured them up so safely, as I did Gray's *Candidate*, that I don't know where they are.

2173. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday evening, May 6, 1781.

I supped with your Countess on Friday at Lord Frederick Campbell's, where I heard of the relief of Gibraltar by Darby. The Spanish fleet kept close in Cadiz: however, he lifted up his leg, and just squirted contempt on them. As he is disembarrassed of his transports, I suppose their ships will scramble on shore rather than fight. Well, I shall be perfectly content with our fleet coming back in a whole skin; it will be enough to have outquixoted Don Quixote's own nation. As I knew your Countess would write the

next day, I waited till she was gone out of town, and would not have much to tell you—not that I have either; and it is giving myself an air to pretend to know more at Twickenham than she can at Henley. Though it is a bitter north-east, I came hither to-day to look at my lilacs, though *à la glace*; and to get from pharaoh, for which there is a rage. I doted on it above thirty years ago; but it is not decent to sit up all night now with boys and girls. My nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, the banker *à la mode*, has been demolished. He and his associate, Sir Willoughby Aston [1], went early t'other night to Brooks's, before Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick, who keep a bank there, were come; but they soon arrived, attacked their rivals, broke their bank, and won above four thousand pounds. 'There,' said Fox, 'so should all usurpers be served!' He did still better; for he sent for his tradesmen, and paid as far as the money would go. In the mornings he continues his war on Lord North, but cannot break *that* bank. The court has carried a secret committee for India affairs, and it is supposed that Rumbold is to be the sacrifice; but as he is near as rich as Lord Clive, I conclude he will escape by the same golden key.

I told you in my last that Tonton [2] was arrived. I brought him this morning to take possession of his new villa, but his inauguration has not been at all pacific. As he has already found out that he may be as despotic as at Saint Joseph's, he began with exiling my beautiful little cat; upon which, however, we shall not quite agree. He then flew at one of my dogs, who returned it by biting his foot till it bled, but was severely beaten for it. I immediately rung for Margaret [3] to dress his foot; but in the midst of my tribulation could not keep my countenance; for she cried,

LETTER 2173.—[1] Sixth baronet; d. 1815.

[2] Madame du Deffand's dog, which she left by will to Mr. Walpole. *Walpole.*

[3] Mr. Walpole's housekeeper. *Walpole.*

'Poor little thing, he does not understand my language!' I hope she will not recollect, too, that he is a Papist!

Berkeley Square, Tuesday, May 8.

I came before dinner, and find your long letter of the 3rd. You have mistaken Tonton's sex, who is a cavalier, and a little of the *mousquetaire* still; but if I do not correct his vivacities, at least I shall not encourage them like my dear old friend.

You say nothing of your health, therefore I trust it is quite re-established: my own is most flourishing for me. They say the Parliament will rise by the Birthday; not that it seems to be any grievance or confinement to anybody. I hope you will soon come[4] and enjoy a quiet summer under the laurels of your own conscience. They are at least as spreading as anybody's else, and the soil will preserve their verdure for ever. Methinks we western powers might well make peace, since we make war so clumsily. Yet I doubt the awkwardness of our enemies will not have brought down our stomach. Well, I wish for the sake of mankind there was an end of their sufferings! Even spectators are not amused—the whole war has passed like the riotous murmurs of the upper gallery before the play begins: they have pelted the candle-snuffers, the stage has been swept, the music has played, people have taken their places, but the deuce a bit of any performance! And when folks go home, they will have seen nothing but a farce, that has cost fifty times more than the best tragedy.

2174. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1781.

Yes, you was in the right in your prophecy of the 21st of April, which I received yesterday. Darby has relieved

[4] From Jersey. *Walpole.*

Gibraltar, without opposition from the Spanish fleet, as we heard two days ago; nay, that he braved them in Cadiz. I think our conduct was not a little rash, but I am sure theirs has been as much the reverse. That of the French is not more explicable, and I can easily believe the King of Spain will resent it.

Your courier, to be sure, is at last returned to you. My letter must have looked quite superannuated.

Lucas has told me of Cav. Mozzi's handsome behaviour —I fear it will not however have made due impression. I was very frank with Lucas, and told him that as a gentleman I could not approve the advice which my Lord's counsellors give him as lawyers, and that he ought to make a very moderate demand on the Chevalier. I do not know why I am consulted—unless that Lucas is jealous of Coney, and wishes to have me on his side. I do not trouble myself with their quarrels, but always give the advice that is honest and noble. Lucas dropped a hint too, which I could but interpret as a declaration that my Lord intends giving the greater part of his mother's estate to her family, which I have heard before. He said my Lord had thoughts of compounding his father's debts, and for that purpose would sell the Dorsetshire estate, which nobody could complain of, as it had not been part of the old estate of the Rolles. I replied, as the whole was in his power, whatever he should give would be a gift, and ought to be taken as such. That it was indifferent to me what he should do with his estate; but I thought the best use he could make of his great fortune would be to pay his father's debts. Yes, my dear Sir, I urged this strongly, and shall be happy if he does, particularly for your nephew's sake, who, by my advice, has written to my Lord on this occasion—yet I must own I shall still have my doubts. My Lord has now and then a just thought: but his infamous crew divert him from

pursuing it. I foretold they would, on his mother's succession, and so you see it has turned out.

As to Lady Orford's jewels, she might have some old black rose diamonds from her mother: she had few from my brother, and before she first went abroad, my father would not suffer her to carry away the diamond earrings, which had cost at least four thousand pounds, and which my brother himself afterwards sold, as I have more than once told Lucas—but no information from me, that contradicts their dirty views, has any effect.

I am grieved to hear you complain of the gout, and the weakness it leaves in your hands. I wish you had adopted my bootikins. I have suffered terribly in my hands, and my fingers are full of chalk-stones, and yet you see I write as well as ever: but do not alarm yourself; your fits have been too rare and too slight to disable you. One always fancies the weakness from a fit incurable; twenty years ago I imagined that I never should walk again.

Our affairs in the East I do believe are very bad; I am surprised they are not so everywhere: but France, Spain, and Holland together, seem very feeble enemies. It seems to be a favourable moment for making peace, as it will be some honour to have kept them all at bay.

2175. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

May 14, 1781.

It is impossible in a letter, my dear Sir, to tell you the concern I feel for your situation, because compliment has so abused all terms, that none are left appropriated to sincerity. I can only appeal to my character, which is not that of a flatterer, and to that of mankind, who are not apt to flatter the unpros-

Letter 2175.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 53-8.

perous. I must not mention my own share, though I assure you your absence adds very considerably to my concern. Yet, were you not so tender a father, you yourself would have little reason to forget this country, which is so degraded that the *Amor Patriae* is little more justifiable than the man who falls in love with a common whore. Your son deserves every kind of esteem: his courage, his patience, his temper, his reason are beyond description. Had I any prospect of being useful to him it would give me the greatest satisfaction. But neither the present moment nor the future, should my life be longer than it probably will, offer any views on which an honest man would build. But, while I do live, he will have a sincere friend, and a house to which he will always be most welcome.

I can add nothing to all you know. Lord Cornwallis's late success over Greene will certainly make us more obstinate against any pacification in favour of America, and Darby's relief of Gibraltar, without the slightest opposition from France or Spain, will confirm *entêtement* in the opinion of its own wisdom, though all it proves is that France and Spain are still more contemptible than England. An opposition that could muster 134 on Sir George Saville's late motion for hearing the delegates shows how strong the opposition might be had they any union or conduct. But neither is to be expected; and, as folly and chance seem to be the only managers on this side of Europe, it is impossible to guess what will happen: for penetration cannot calculate on such data.

You talked very sensibly on the sensations occasioned by the behaviour of a certain young person[1], and yet, though the elder no doubt at first comforted himself with the *favourable* comparison that would be made in preference to hypocrisy over debauchery, yet, as insults are more felt than

[1] The Prince of Wales.

reflections, I should think provocations would have more effect than the cool deliberations of envy, and yet timidity will strengthen the latter. I confess I am angry at the younger for giving these advantages to the elder. But what good could come out of Nazareth? *Aetas parentum* pejor avis *tulit nequiores.*

16th.—La Mothe Picquet's capture of several of the Eustatia ships arrived yesterday noon. In the City it occasioned rage against Lord Sandwich, who had been applied to for convoy. But, by night, the word, given out at this end of the town, and which will be echoed, was that it was a blow that would fall only on some underwriters. And for convoy, how should it be sent, our ships not being half manned? In short, we desire nothing but to be imposed on, and the worst reasons satisfy. On Monday, on Burke's motion for inquiry into the transactions at St. Eustatia, the opposition was treated with the utmost scorn, for impudence is accepted by the nation for spirit, and unfair war for policy. To be sure unfair war, when we are inferior, is spirit, but then it is not policy.

22nd.—My letter, as you see by the date, has been long written, but waited for your son's departing. He called this morning, when I was abroad, and left word he would call again after dinner, so I finish it for him.

I have nothing material to add, for any new folly of Lord Rockingham is certainly not important. In his panic on the riots last June, he went to Gloucester House one morning, when the Duke, from his having done so once before four or five years ago, and from his never having been since nor to the Duchess, would not see him. On this he has turned drummer and trumpeter for the Cumberlands, made all his friends go thither, and has kept Lord John and Burke entirely from Gloucester House. On Saturday, the Duke of Cumberland gave a great dinner to this moppet

of chieftain, and to the Duke of Portland and others. But, as Lord Rockingham never despairs of being minister, nor is delicate about the means, I believe the influence the Duke of Cumberland has over his nephew is a great ingredient in Lord Rockingham's views; and he, who shunned Wilkes, will crouch to the Luttrels. But what signifies the views of such a gang of fools, who have no spirit but what pride and a bottle of hartshorn can infuse into their leader? Somebody knocks, and I must finish. I shall be ever

Most truly and affectionately yours,
H. W.

2176. To Sir Horace Mann.

Berkeley Square, May 16, 1781.

By not sending you the first rumours of Lord Cornwallis's victory[1] over the American General, Greene[2], and by waiting for the confirmation, which is not yet come, though undoubted, I am able to balance accounts, though perhaps you did not desire fortune to be so impartial. Yesterday we learnt that La Mothe Piquet, who had lain in ambush (no sea-term, I doubt) at the mouth of the Channel, had fallen in *au beau milieu* of our fleet from Eustatia, laden with the plunder of all nations, and has taken at least twenty of them. The two men-of-war and two frigates that convoyed all that spoil took to their heels, and, to talk like an Irishman, are on Irish ground in one of their harbours. To-day we *invented* a recapture by Darby, but he is not arrived. However, our loss of so much wealth will not comfort the King of Spain for the relief of Gibraltar, nor the Dutch for the loss of St. Eustatia; for I do not suppose

Letter 2176.—[1] At Guilford Court-House on March 15, 1781.
[2] Major-General Nathaniel Greene (1742-1786), a native of Rhode Island, originally a blacksmith.

that France will invite its allies to the partition, unless, like the lion in the fable, to see her seize all on different pleas—I should say, *prerogatives*, to which *nullum tempus, nullum plea occurrunt.*

My military details are very brief, for I neither understand them, nor load my memory with them; and for your information it is better I should not, as the quintessence is more easily digested, and can be less contested.

The gazette of private news will lie in little room. The disconsolate widower, your friend Sir John Dick, is going to be married already; and, which is still more rash at his age, to a giantess. She is the eldest daughter of the late Sir John Clavering, and was ripened by the climate of India, like an orange to a shaddock. I suppose she intends to be a relict, and then to marry some young Gargantua.

Strawberry Hill, 17th.

I came hither this morning; but as I shall return to town to-morrow, when the post goes away, my letter will be in time, though a little ashamed of being so meagre. I doubt my dispatches are grown very barren, though the field of battle is so extensive; but you must allow that our enemies are not very alert, and that we have some negative credit in not having lost more, after risking so much. As to domestic news, it is no wonder my details are lean. The House of Lords, who never fatigued themselves, are become as antiquated as their college, the Heralds' Office, and as idle. In the other House there are not many debates, and the unshaken majority renders those of little consequence. The disunion of the leaders increases this supineness. For smaller events, I go so little into the world, that many escape me, and fewer interest me. Can one take much part in the occupations of the grandchildren of one's first acquaintance? I might, no doubt, collect paragraphs, if

I took pains; for certainly no reformation has taken place. Dissipation is at high-water mark; but it is either without variety, novelty, and imagination, or the moroseness of age makes me see no taste in their pleasures. Lateness of hours is the principal feature of the times, and certainly demands no stress of invention. Every fashionable place is still crowded; no instance of selection neither. Gaming is yet general; though money, the principal ingredient, does not abound. My old favourite game, faro, is lately revived. I have played but thrice, and not all night, as I used to do; it is not decent to end where one began, nor to sit up with a generation by two descents my juniors. Mr. Fox is the first figure in all the places I have mentioned; the hero in Parliament, at the gaming-table, at Newmarket. Last week he passed four and twenty hours without interruption at all three, or on the road from one to the other; and ill the whole time, for he has a bad constitution, and treats it as if he had been dipped in the immortal river: but I doubt his heel at least will be vulnerable.

There is a topic[3] which begins to predominate, but not proper for the post, nor one that shall be so to me; for I recollect under what king I was born, and consequently can have nothing to do with a reign so far removed as the next will be. As I too am always partial to youth,—having not, at least, the spleen of age,—I make the greatest allowances for inexperience and novel passions. In one word, I give no ear to the commencement of future history; it is a page I shall not peruse: and what are the first leaves of a book to one that can make no progress in it? I see no prospect of conclusion to the war—occupation enough, one should think, for everybody at present; and yet, unless roused by some event, which too is forgotten in three days,

[3] The Prince of Wales. *Walpole.*

no one seems to care about the general face of affairs, but is as indifferent as if we were in a dead calm.

Your nephew is to come hither to-morrow morning to show my house to some company; *my* nephew[4] is to command a small camp this summer. Lucas[5] has again been with me and told me Mr. Sharpe thought the late Countess should have given her money here to her son (which is about 10,000*l.*), and that the Cavaliero should divide it with my Lord. I treated that idea with great scorn, and said I knew no authority Sharpe had to make wills for people; and that in one word I would not meddle in it, unless my Lord made it his absolute request to me—and then only, upon condition that I am allowed to act like a gentleman, and to prescribe such terms as would be for my Lord's honour—I suppose I shall not be requested—nor hear any more of it—My dear Sir, I know the gang but too well, and thence predicted but too truly. My Lord has answered your nephew's letter, and tells him he is not legally bound to pay his father's debts, and refers him to Lucas—*mon Chancelier vous dira le reste*, as kings say when they are ashamed of what they are going to do. I shall reserve the remnant of my paper for to-morrow, in case I should find any novelty in town.

Berkeley Square, 18th.

No, I have not heard a syllable, nor will add one.

[4] The Earl of Orford.
[5] A lawyer employed by Lord Orford.

2177. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, May 16[1], 1781.

Your last account of yourself was so indifferent, that I am impatient for a better; pray send me a much better.

I know little in your way but that Sir Richard Worsley has just published a *History of the Isle of Wight*, with many views poorly done enough. Mr. Bull[2] is honouring me, at least my *Anecdotes of Painting*, exceedingly. He has let every page into a pompous sheet, and is adding every print of portrait, building, &c., that I mention, and that he can get, and specimens of all our engravers. It will make eight magnificent folios, and be a most valuable body of our arts.

Nichols the printer has published a new *Life of Hogarth*, of near two hundred pages—many more, in truth, than it required—chiefly it is the *life of his works*, containing all the variations, and notices of any persons whom he had in view. I cannot say there are discoveries of many prints which I have not mentioned, though I hear Mr. Gulston says he has fifteen such—but I suppose he only fancies so. Mr. Nichols says our printsellers are already adding Hogarth's name to several spurious. Mr. Stevens[3], I hear, has been allowed to ransack Mrs. Hogarth's house for obsolete and unfinished plates, which are to be completed and published. Though she was not pleased with my account of her husband, and seems by these transactions to have encouraged the second, I assure you I have much more reason to be satisfied than she has, the editor or editors

Letter 2177.—[1] The date of the original; in the 4to ed. of the letters to Cole conjecturally corrected to June, which date was adopted by Cunningham.

[2] Richard Bull, a print collector.

[3] George Steevens (1736-1800), the Shakespeare commentator. He had a fine collection of Hogarth prints.

being much civiller to living me than to dead Hogarth—yet I should not have complained. Everybody has the same right to speak their sentiments. Nay, in general I have gentler treatment than I expected, and I think the world and I part good friends.

I am now setting about the completion of my Aedes Strawberrianae. A painter is to come hither on Monday to make a drawing of the Tribune, and finish T. Sandby's fine view of the gallery, to which I could never get him to put the last hand. They will then be engraved with a few of the chimney-pieces, which will complete the plates. I must add an appendix of curiosities purchased or acquired since the Catalogue was printed. This will be awkward, but I cannot afford to throw away an hundred copies. I shall take care, if I can, that Mr. Gough does not get fresh intelligence from my engravers, or he will advertise my supplement before the book appears. I do not think it was very civil to publish such private intelligence, to which he had no right without my leave—but everybody seems to think he may do what is good in his own eyes. I saw the other day, in a collection of prints of seats (exquisitely engraved), a very rude insult on the Duke of Devonshire. The designer went to draw a view of Chiswick, without asking leave, and was—not hindered, for he has given it, but he says he was treated *illiberally*, the house not being shown without tickets, which he not only censures, but calls a singularity, though a frequent practice in other places, and practised *there* to my knowledge for these thirty years—so everybody is to come into your house if he pleases, draw it whether you please or not, and by the same rule, I suppose, put anything into his pocket that he likes. I do know, by experience, what a grievance it is to have a house worth being seen, and though I submit in consequence to great inconveniencies, they do not save me from many rude-

nesses. Mr. Southcote was forced to shut up his garden, for the savages who came as connoisseurs scribbled a thousand brutalities, in the buildings, upon his religion. I myself, at Canons, saw a beautiful table of oriental alabaster that had been split in two by a buck in boots jumping up backwards to sit upon it.

I have placed the oaken head of Henry the Third over the middle arch of the armoury. Pray tell me what the church of Barnwell[4], near Oundle, was, which his Majesty endowed, and whence his head came.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

2178. To Earl Harcourt.

My dear Lord, May 18, 1781.

I did not see the Clive last night, as she was gone to Mr. Franks's, but I left your Lordship's invitation with Mrs. Mestivyer, who told me her sister was very weak and out of order; and so I find by the enclosed, which I received this morning. Indeed, poor women, they are both in a bad way!

I am delighted to find that Philip de Vendôme[1] was the famous Grand Prieur who had so much wit and spirit, as the enclosed from Anderson proves. How lucky that a Prince who had so interesting a countenance when a boy, should have had common sense afterwards. I cannot say his beauty remained. Lord Dacre has a whole length of him at last, in a *habit de chasse*. It looks like one of those drunken, red-faced old women, who follow a camp, and half of whose clothes are scoured regimentals.

[4] In Northamptonshire.

Letter 2178.—[1] Philippe (1655–1727), Prince de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France, and great-grandson of Henry IV.

2179. To Earl Harcourt.

1781.

I have such numberless obligations to your Lordship, and so little power of returning them, that you must allow me to take the first moment of showing that at least I wish to prove my gratitude, and you will, I am sure, not reject the testimonial, as you know it is of no other worth. You liked the picture I take the liberty of sending, yet it is so indifferent, that I would not presume to offer it, if I did not like it too, which proves that I have more pleasure in pleasing your Lordship than myself; and *that*, I hope, will give it a little value, though it has none else.

2180. To the Rev. William Mason.

May 22, 1781.

I am pleased that you think seriously of making me a visit soon, but you might have retrenched the comfort you hold out of its being a very short one. As you come as seldom as a comet, I should not have been alarmed, if you intended to stay as long. My publication shall certainly not precede your arrival. I can scarce even call that delay a compliment, having already suspended its appearance. In short, my advertisement prevented the spurious editions, and I flatter myself I am forgotten; at least I have gained time, and at worst will publish in July or August, when all the world is dispersed, and I can trust the fickleness of the age for not recollecting in winter what passed after the prodigious interval of three months. Should any national calamity happen, no incredible event, I will turn the ill wind to private good, and steal out, while the consternation lasts.

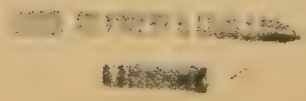
Your objection to the play I allow to be fully just, and

I know fifty others, but don't imagine I will correct anything; no, that would show predilection and partiality to it; partiality I have, but it is to your corrections, and it shall have none other; I have said the truth. I think your alterations marvellous, and it is favourable to the tragedy, that it could produce your alterations and Lady Di's drawings; you shall have the full honours of yours, for, first or last, they shall stand by themselves in your name. I have no jealousy; I allow you full superiority, and will always avow it, and have more pleasure in the fame of my friends than appetite for it myself. As to *The Mysterious Mother* being acted I am perfectly secure, at least while Lord Hertford is Lord Chamberlain; nay, whoever should succeed him I think would not license it without my consent; but enough on a subject of which I am sick and weary, and yet I have nothing to replace it.

It was not from me, I assure you, that you have received any defence of Milton, nor do I know anything of it, but what you tell me, that it is in the *Memoirs* of Hollis. Boswell, that quintessence of busybodies, called on me last week, and was let in, which he should not have been, could I have foreseen it. After tapping many topics, to which I made as dry answers as an unbribed oracle, he vented his errand. 'Had I seen Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*?' I said, slightly, 'No, not yet'; and so overlaid his whole impertinence. As soon as he could recover himself, with Caledonian sincerity, he talked of Macklin's new play, and pretended to like it, which would almost make one suspect that he knows a dose of poison has already been administered; though, by the way, I hear there is little good in the piece, except the likeness of Sir Pertinax[1] to twenty thousand Scots.

LETTER 2180. — [1] Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in Macklin's *Man of the World*.

You will find that I have gotten a new idol—in a word, a successor to Rosette, and almost as great a favourite; nor is this a breach of vows and constancy, but an act of piety. In a word, my poor dear old friend Madame du Deffand had a little dog of which she was extremely fond, and the last time I saw her she made me promise, if I should survive her, to take charge of it. I did. It is arrived, and I was going to say, it is incredible how fond I am of it, but I have no occasion to brag of my dogmanity. I dined at Richmond House t'other day, and mentioning whither I was going, the Duke said, 'Own the truth, shall not you call at home first and see Tonton?' He guessed rightly. He is now sitting on my paper as I write—not the Duke, but Tonton.

I know no public matters but what the newspapers tell you as well as me. Darby is come home, but Gibraltar is in a manner destroyed by the Spanish bombs. The Dutch fleet is hovering about, but it is a pickpocket war, and not a martial one, and I never attend to petty larceny. Adieu!

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